

Brahmaputra R.  
A S S

Yangtze R.  
Mekong R.

Chungking

Chao tung

Varung  
Anshun  
river  
ngyu  
Annan  
zhchung

Lushai  
Hills  
Kalemyo  
Kalewa

Monywa  
Pakokku  
Maktila  
Tenang aung  
Yawn

Rangoon

Haiphong  
Hanoi

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CHINA-BURMA VAGABOND

*By the same author*

UNDERSTANDING CHINA

CHINA, MY CHINA

THROUGH CHINESE EYES

FACE TO FACE WITH CHINA

# CHINA-BURMA VAGABOND

by

HAROLD B. RATTENBURY

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TO  
MARGARET, DAVID  
AND  
ELIZABETH ANN

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*From drawings by Norman James*

## FOREWORD

**A**VAGABOND is one who has "no fixed habitation," a "wanderer"—nothing worse than that at first. That was my condition for 291 days of continual wandering by air and sea and land, particularly in Burma and China, in the early days of the war.

A vagabond can keep his secrets, and it was needful for me to keep mine. For after I left them many of my friends in China were lodged in Japanese internment camps, and, still more, there and elsewhere, were under the heel of a ruthless and vigilant invader.

This vagabond kept a journal. Hardly a day of the 291 passed without some note being written about the people and the places he had seen. Though, for the reader's sake, the diary form of writing is little used in his story, almost every sentence is based upon facts recorded at the very time and place where he experienced them.

One advantage the vagabond had over all but a very few of his contemporaries. Whilst his wanderings in China, in those uncertain days were quite unique, over the rest of his way he flew across many places that were to be the world's great battlefields. Before the soldiers went he had seen these places from the air. When, in the tragic aftermath others were studying maps, he was recalling the actual scenes from memory. In the past sometimes a vagabond has proved to be the creator of a captivating story. All that this wanderer claims is that he gives you the true sense of rush and speed of a journey taken under great pressure of time. He may seem to confuse, often enough, the trivial with the important and the great with the small, as even you might do in a train rushing along at seventy miles an hour. Yet if the people of many lands and their ways, and especially of war-stricken China and Burma, are of interest to you, if you can listen to stories of missionaries as well as of other human beings, if you want to know what it's like to travel through the air as well as in many different ways by land and water, then come with this vagabond as he wanders again over the face of the earth.

Something of the meaning of it all I've tried to gather up in a last chapter, where I look back on China as on all the journey through the following years. I was indeed a vagabond, and often I must have looked a vagabond, all grimy and unkempt upon those China roads. Once official eyes were on me and they kept me for

five days until they could assure themselves of my credentials. This and all else you'll find recorded in its place, with a good many other things you'd never expect such a vagabond as I to tell you. As you read, like the vagabond himself you'll find strange people turning up in unexpected places. If some stretch of the road proves wearisome, press on with me undaunted. Many a day through the mist we shall find sunshine, and round the corner a glorious vista will burst upon our sight. In spite of tired bodies and worn feet, as we go on together we shall share the ups and downs of many unforgettable experiences. Let us keep our eyes wide open and talk and listen as we go. There are many things in every land that hardly anyone but vagabonds like us may know. This journey, that we go together, will be among strange people in strange places in a strange and stirring time, and we shall find. I think, that vagabonds are never quite alone.

Included in this mysterious aid are innumerable kindnesses from friends old and new, and of several nations, all along the way. Some quite inadequate expressions of gratitude I have sought here and there to record.

To two friends in England my very special thanks are due. Rev. Norman A. Birtwhistle, B.A., B.Sc., in the midst of a very busy life, has found time to catch and portray the spirit of my journey in his beautiful design on the wrapper.

Miss A. M. Embleton has once again been my collaborator and fellow-worker. It is thanks most of all to her help, in many ways, that the story of my travels, told through the years to many audiences, has now at length become a book for those who will to read.

The Chinese title on the binding of this book has been devised and written by an old friend of Hankow days, Dr. Francis C. M. Wei of the Central China College, Wuchang. He has done me this kindness without having seen the manuscript, and is naturally free from all responsibility for any of my statements or opinions.

July, 1946  
Oakwood,  
Middlesex.

## BOOK ONE

### TALE OF A TRAVELLER

I'VE always been a traveller and never really had a "native place" My father was a "Travelling Preacher" In his days, by the rule of his Church and mine, he might stay in a town for three years, if he was acceptable to his people, but never for longer, except under very unusual circumstances

I was born at Witney, in Oxfordshire, to which lovely old-world town I never returned till after sixty years of travelling I lived successively in Reading, Workington, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Wakefield, Sheffield, Halifax, Nelson and Sunderland, three years in each place excepting Sunderland, from which town I set off for travels further afield In a sense Yorkshire claimed me, not only because I resided for a time in three of its great towns, but because eight happy years as boy and master were spent at Woodhouse Grove School, Apperley Bridge, near Leeds, and three at Headingley College, now Wesley College, Headingley, in the same city The team life that I learned in both places proved the best preparation for the days that were to be How strangely all one's earlier experiences are built into maturer life

As one looks back, one realises what a tug it must have been for the parents, every three years of their life, to pull up their roots from a happy and friendly home and go out to the unknown pastures To us children, at least in our younger years, it was sheer adventure and joy to pack ourselves into a railway carriage and chug-chug away to another "circuit," as we called the area of our father's new work

There were seven of us altogether, so that, with father and mother and nursemaid, we were a formidable carriageful To make assurance doubly sure, my father used to mass us round the carriage windows as the train drew up at an intermediate station Thus protected, I never remember our carriage being invaded at the time of such a triennial removal That was one advantage of being a member of a sizeable family There were many other advantages We who've known the rough and tumble of such a life have never been envious of "only" children or small families I suppose we must have gone short of many of the amenities of life, but it was *reh-lao*, as the Chinese say, full of "heat and noise," battle

and fun. So in my childhood's days was I prepared by nature and training for the life ahead. My father's father, John, was a "Travelling Preacher" too. Within his own communion and far beyond, he was perhaps the most moving and popular preacher of his day. He died in 1880, but I still meet old people who vividly remember him and the very "texts" from which he preached.

All through my boyhood his face looked down upon me from an oil-painting on the wall. It was a kindly face, framed in a grey beard; without moustache, lest his public speech should be muffled. Those eyes used to follow us round the room. He'd been President of the Conference, the highest dignity our communion can confer on any of its ministers. His tablet is there to this day in Wesley's Chapel, City Road. Somehow, to me, he was part of the family; an ideal and a blessing to a growing boy. Was this a preparation too? Was this a sort of ancestor-worship such as binds the generations living and dead together in the Chinese family? Was I *pai tsu-tsung* ("worshipping my ancestors") without knowing it? We lived near enough to him to honour him. Even in China, after the third generation, the ancestors grow dim and vanish away into thin air and are worshipped no more. When, after my years of life in China, I returned to England again, that old oil-portrait came into my possession. My children called him the "ancestor." The glory was departing, you see. Finally, on moving into a small modern house, I made a burnt offering of him in the back garden. For I couldn't bear to think of him, in his wide gilt frame, gathering dust in an auctioneer's store-room. Was that Chinese veneration coming out in me, I wonder? Or was it just human decency anywhere?

This grandfather of mine had been the husband of a Sheffield lady, whose father was a coal-merchant of good standing in the city. Early in her married life she came across the printed diary of one "Jack Rattenbury, the Rob Roy of the West." He was a famous Devon smuggler. His son, Peter, lies in the Churchyard at Beer, near Exmouth. In the same neighbourhood are still to be found the "Rattenbury Caves," where he stored his smuggled goods. Jack Rattenbury had been a traveller too. My grandmother threw that shocking book upon the fire in disgust that she was in any way connected with such a family, and it was long years before other copies of his diary became our proud possession again. Whether he was a direct ancestor or not may perhaps be left in doubt. We never wanted to check the matter up; but we certainly

claimed him as our own. The steel-type engraving of his face shows a remarkable likeness to the "ancestor." The book is his own recollection of a busy life. He lived before the days when the Methodist Revival in Devon and Cornwall stamped wrecking and smuggling as a sin. He was no wrecker, but a great smuggler and a great traveller. In the days of Napoleon he'd got across the Atlantic in a sailing-ship and, at the age of fourteen, had reached New York. His more frequent trips were to Ireland and to Spain, and, above all, to Cherbourg and the Channel Isles, from which places he seems to have been expert at importing kegs of rum and wine and French lace across the Channel duty free. His life was one long encounter with excise-men and revenue cutters, and he was well-known to the navy, the water-police of those days. Once he was all but caught red-handed. The Excise men chased him into his own home, but, like other Rattenburys, he'd an active and loyal wife. She threw herself on the floor in such a way as to send the pursuers sprawling on their faces whilst her husband fled out of the back door and made his escape. He was finally pensioned off by the Lord of the Manor and died in peace in his own bed. The reason he had for writing his diary was to secure a little money with which to eke out his insufficient pension. That pension was more considerable than might appear, judged by the standards of to-day. At the end of his book there is a note:

"The Smuggler gratefully acknowledges the kindness of the Right Hon. Lord Rolle, who now allows him one shilling a week for life."<sup>1</sup>

There is adventure and humour enough in his record, and quite a streak of piety.

"I have also experienced, as may be seen in the foregoing narrative, the greatest vicissitudes, my spirits having been alternately elated by success, or depressed by misfortune, but in the midst of the whole I never yielded to despair, for hope was the polestar which shed its cheering rays, and illuminated my path in the darkest storms of adversity."<sup>1</sup>

Certainly he was a traveller and adventurer both. His story was told in dramatic form by the B.B.C. on May 30th, 1946. So that some readers may have met him before.

An uncle of mine was a traveller too, having visited New Zealand in his youth. Of his two sons one was a steamship captain,

*Memories of a Smuggler, the Principal Events in the life of John Rattenbury of Beer, Devonshire, commonly called "the Rob Roy of the West" by J. Harvey, 1837*

running between Malaya and the China Coast When I reached China in 1902 expecting to meet him, I was met by his widow instead, who took me to see his grave in the famous "Happy Valley" in Hong Kong Another cousin, an architect, spent most of his life in Canada Still another uncle and two of his sons were missionaries in Africa and China.

All through my youth there were shadowy traditions of other relatives who had gone to America and Australia, especially Australia, with its Botany Bay and its mysterious wealth One fine day "our ship would come in," bringing the treasures from golden Australia that our relatives had amassed when they made good. When years afterwards I looked at the pyjamas, mainly holes and string, hanging up on washing-day to dry in the Wuchang garden, of an Australian "cousin," I finally gave up all hope of ever being redeemed from poverty by the Australian road. There they were, however, dreams and ghosts of family adventurers, ever beckoning my boyish spirit to think of a wider world than Britain

Travel somehow seemed to be in our blood, and in my generation the journeyings have gone on One of my brothers has spent years of his life in Malta and in Singapore and in India He used a few months vacation motoring, for the sheer joy of the experience, from the Cape to Cairo Another, as opportunity came, has visited, in his busy life, Australia, Fiji, Canada and the United States, as well as countries round the Mediterranean, and especially Italy Nor is this true of my own immediate family alone, but of the other families with which we've been united through marriage and relationship As in so many other British homes, we've relatives settled across the seas where our home-loving folk, driven by want or lured by adventure, have gone to earn their living and have stayed Some British people may be of the stay-at-home sort, but my lot has been cast by birth, tradition and circumstance among those who wander over the face of the earth and its waters

"What do they know of England who only England know?" We return to our country loving the green and pleasant land, so different from the wide spaces of the earth and so perfect in its garden-like neatness Yet rather limited and shut in We love its fields and lanes and woods, but perhaps we should not love them so much except for the sense of port after stormy seas, rest after toilsome roads, home after wandering

What would have happened to the next generation but for the war, who can say? Three of them had already been on the Continent in their teens and at the nation's call one found himself in Durban, Kenya, Madagascar, Ceylon, India, and Burma, and another in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany and Denmark Still another has crossed the Atlantic Such records must be true of hundreds of British families "We all are travellers here, along life's various road" I was born and bred among a travelling people

As a boy in Sheffield, my holidays were often solitary, the other members of the family being busy about their various ways, and all unconsciously I prepared myself by long solitary hikes over the moors and lovely environs of Sheffield, for walks undreamed of then through the loveliness of China To that country I went, in 1902, on an old-fashioned P & O boat bound for Australia and changed, at Colombo, into a still smaller boat bound for Singapore, Hong Kong, and Shanghai You'd your choice in those days of an inner dark cabin with a fan or an outer cabin with a port-hole, but no fan That was, of course, as a second-class passenger Even so, compared with everyday life in England, life on board that old-fashioned boat was something of a luxury then

From 1902 to 1934 I lived in China Travel was still the order of the day. In my early period I was tied down to school life in term time, but in the holidays there was always the welcome change of a jaunt through the country to some far-off station

Later, it became my business to journey in most parts of my Province of Hupeh, as it had been my occasional privilege previously Some of our days of travel were almost unbelievably long I once did forty miles on foot over country roads and by-paths in one day How often, as I went my hurried ways in China's beautiful countryside, have I longed to sit and stare But duty and the road called, and I had mainly to be content with memories A much-loved elder missionary has been known, more than once, to walk sixty miles through the night between afternoon meal on a Sunday and breakfast on Monday, in his own house, at eight. Not a few of my friends travelled long spells of thirty miles a day on end, day after day, from station to station If a man couldn't walk, he was no good in our part of China I preferred twenty to twenty-five miles One was fresher then for the duties of the day and the folks one had to meet

Yet it was not till 1934 that I had the opportunity of travelling

extensively in China Prior to returning to take up work in England I was sent round the whole area where my Church was at work What a dream Peiping seemed after more long years in the less glorious Wuchang and Hankow and the drab Yangtse Valley What magnificence I found in the mountains of Yunnan and Kueichow after the gentler but very beautiful mountain resort of Kulng in Kiangsi How memorable was a certain sunset of black cloud and fiery gold on the river at Ningpo as I returned from visiting the pilgrim island of Pootoo with its temples to Buddha and Kwanyin—the “goddess of mercy”

Then, when I thought my travelling days were done, I returned to life on an office stool in London, varied a little with preaching and lecturing. Yet, in the last ten years in Britain, the travel has happily gone on. At a low computation, it has meant 120,000 miles in ten years in this land alone This traveller, who had no native place, has rejoiced to be at home everywhere among the brotherhood of his own beloved “people called Methodists”

In 1937 came the Japanese attack on China, and by 1939 it had been ordained that I must pack my bags and be off again to visit the old scenes, to comfort the old friends, to be an ambassador of sympathy and understanding friendship between British and Chinese of goodwill and common purpose I left England by air on August 2nd, 1939 I returned once more by air and landed in Poole Harbour on May 19th, 1940

This, like so much of the journey, was not according to plan I flew out to save time and to secure every moment of China's lovely autumn weather for my travels I was to have returned home by sea Owing to the conditions in China brought about by the war, and the constant delays, my stay there was much protracted. So, in the event, my journey home also was by air, giving me certain added experiences over the one-way journey.

Air travel in 1939 and 1940 must seem very old-fashioned to many to-day. For that very reason, there may be some advantage in my simple description of what it meant then to me There is always interest in comparing the new with the old

You're to be fellow-travellers on this unusual journey As we fly across Europe and Asia, we shall see the kingdoms of the world stretched out below us, almost in a moment of time We shall visit strange cities with their many-tongued, many-coloured people. We shall scale high mountains and pass through the rich plains The loveliness of Burma, the endurance and the refugees

of China, wars and rumours of wars, and the victims of war will be our daily companions We shall see the people of many lands and be the fellow travellers of many—people always different and always the same In the Middle ages no one was thought to be educated till he'd travelled and learned the minds and circumstances of alien races So, as we set out, let us be curious to learn, let us have eyes to see, let us be good companions “*Tsou Tsou*,” as the Chinese say—“Go, go ” Let's get on our way

## THROUGH THE SKIES TO CHINA

## I

THE GOOD SHIP *CANOPUS*—AN ATHENIAN GUIDE

To sail gently along through the air at twice the rate of an express train, and five times the speed of a destroyer cleaving the ocean, reads like a rather awesome experience, until you know the joy of it. That was, I suppose, less than half the speed of a Spitfire or a Typhoon; but in 1939 it was good enough for me and wholly pleasant.

In May of that year I'd been in the Channel Islands and had flown back to Southampton with my wife one sunny day, over the sea and in and out of the fleecy clouds, that must have appeared to a traveller watching from a down-Channel boat to streak the blue heavens. The plane was noisy and it was impossible to speak or listen by reason of a sound like the dragging of chains. Otherwise the journey was enjoyable enough. "How did you like that?" I said on reaching *terra firma* "Oh, it's lovely and easy enough," she replied. I'd even then some feeling that if I were to avail myself of every moment of China's steady, dry, autumn for my journey amidst her troubled people, there'd be no achieving it unless I flew across the world.

"And I finally concluded that if I did not fly thither it was impossible to make the journey." This quotation, on my British Airways ticket wallet, from *The Travels and Adventures of Pera Tafux, 1435-1439*, was exactly my condition, and so it came to pass that at 4.30 a.m. on Wednesday, August 2nd, 1939, I was walking down the gangway and stepping into the British Airways flying-boat, *Canopus*, as she lay moored to a buoy somewhere in the Solent.

The previous day my wife, and what members of the family had been at home, had ridden with me on the top of a 29 bus from the Triangle at Palmer's Green to Victoria Station. There my 50 lb. of luggage, inclusive of two fibre bags, which weighed 11 lb., had been weighed. Then the owner was weighed too. The dial on the weighing machine wasn't visible to me, but I noted

"the smile on the face of the tiger" Whatever the weight, I was allowed to proceed, and soon found myself almost the only passenger on the special train to Southampton. I was served with a sumptuous meal which was part of the service and for which there was nothing to pay More about that anon

As I sat in solitary state, I pondered For the previous few weeks those great indiarubber elephants, the barrage balloons, had been seen above London We'd watched them from our suburban garden We'd seen the sky full of them from the top of that 29 bus We'd been warned that there were two philosophies abroad in the world and that unless there was a miraculous change of heart in Germany, war was inevitable Yet in spite of all warnings, in spite of the balloons, we dared to hope that even now the worst might be averted I remembered having seen a friend off by Dutch plane, from Hendon to Hankow, at the very height of the Munich crisis He'd got through all right and had reached Hankow, in time to strengthen his brethren, one week before the Japanese arrived and captured that city Though my chances of a peaceful journey seemed as remote as his, neither wife nor family said me nay They went for their holiday to Guernsey, and a son and his wife to France, so little, even in August 1939, were we all aware of the suddenness of the war that was to burst upon the world within a month So many crises had prudently, or even shamefully, been avoided that it was possible, even then, to hope for peace

Arrived at Southampton, I was met and taken to the South-Western Hotel I was given a card with the number of my room and the name of the airways agent and all essential instructions "You will be called at 3 45 a m Your baggage will be collected at 4 15 a m , and you will be at the aerodrome at 4 30" And so it was All along the route everything was made as easy as possible. You'd nothing to do but to submit to the regulations and you flew without a care Normally, we were some two or three hours in the air, came down for twenty minutes for refuelling, and were allowed to go ashore and have coffee, or cocoa or tea, all at the Company's expense Each evening-time we came to earth and were rushed off to the main hotel of the place where we were to spend the night The Company's Agent had our cards ready, with room number, rate of exchange of local currency, times of calling, getting-up and meals, and, thank God, "no tips" How it may be with others I don't know, but, to me, the chief bugbear

of a journey is the "tipping." What are you to give to the "boots," or maid, or lift-man, to deck steward, table steward games steward? There they stand, metaphorically at least, with hands stretched out, in silent judgment on your parsimony. You give what you feel right to give; you never know whether you've been too niggardly or too extravagant, and the unpleasant feeling is apt to mar a happy voyage. Well, in 1939, the British Airways had done away with that. There was ample provision in your ticket money to cover all these things though I rather suspected that, by 1940, this pernicious habit of the British traveller was showing a tendency to assert itself again. I hope the British Airways and its successors will take and maintain steps to stamp out this iniquity for all time. At least they gave one traveller peace of mind and he'll be for ever grateful.

Because times and circumstances change, I'm going to describe the flying-boat that was to be my home till I reached Rangoon, four and a third days later.

The *Canopus*, a four-engined machine, was supported on the water by a couple of fish-shaped floats. She was divided into five sections. In the nose were the driving-wheels where the captain and pilot sat side by side, amidst transparency that gave them the view in every possible direction. Immediately behind their fastened door was a few feet of mail-room where the "flight clerk" pursued his task of checking over passports, mail and landing permits. Above him was a room where a wireless operator functioned. He was the only member of the crew we never saw when the boat was in the air. Behind the "flight clerk" was a narrow passage-way, with a diminutive lavatory on one side and a kitchenette on the other. Here the "flight steward" was in charge. Still further back the cabins began. First a little place where three might sit and where the captain and the pilot took their meals. Then immediately behind, the large main cabin, with seats for ten or twelve, and a good, wide passage-way. Above the door was a dial-face which registered the height of the plane above the ground. So you could watch your progress to and from the heavens. On the wall was a rack with some dozen Penguin books, if anyone grew blasé enough to want to read. The plane was also well supplied with all the latest illustrated papers.

The seating was quite perfect. It consisted of comfortable arm-chairs which you could make upright or slanting, raising or lowering them with a simple manipulation of the arms. The seat

of the chair was a lifebuoy, which you were taught immediately to use There was also a belt which, as the plane rose or fell or bumped, you were exhorted to use for your own comfort or safety With this you strapped yourself to your chair There was cotton-wool to stuff into your ears as you rose or descended too rapidly, lest you should have your ears temporarily plugged or deafened by the sudden changes in height Most people didn't bother about these things, but, in case of discomfort, you nipped your nose and exhaled your breath, and your ears rapidly cleared again Then there was butter-scotch to be sucked if you felt air-sick, and fruit to be had between meals if you needed it Everything one human being was able to think of for the comfort of another seemed to have been prepared There was an adjustable table, too, attached to each seat, on which you took your breakfast, lunch and tea and on which I was able at all times to write all the things I saw and felt as steadily as at my own desk at home You could look out of the windows and see all heaven above you and all earth below Added to all this you could, as a rule, regulate the temperature at will, though at great heights you grew chilly and piled on an extra rug or two As you descended, it became hot and there was nothing to do about that till you flew aloft again Behind the main cabin was a smoking cabin where slaves to the weed might smoke with impunity, but never when we were down on the water or near an aerodrome Finally, in the tail of the plane was the baggage-room, where the mail and our bags were housed I didn't see all this at once except on the chart of the plane I was too busy wondering what was to happen next when the plane door was locked and, following the instructions of the flight steward, I'd strapped myself firmly into my chair

First, the four engines began to whirl, though only slowly at first Then the plane began to taxi over the water After that there was a sizzling sound, which I found to be caused by some device to extend the upper wings, downward a few inches, the better to make use of what air and wind there might be as a lever to climb with Finally, the engines quickened and we rushed along at breakneck speed over the water Huge waves rushed past us There was a pull and a tug, and suddenly we were out of the water, mounting, mounting, with all the Isle of Wight turned over on one side, just as Hong Kong appeared as you climbed to the Peak up the cable railway By and by we were level again and had left the island behind as we sped over the Channel with its

strangely assorted, cotton-wool clouds Then a sudden bump announced that something was happening and, looking down, I saw that we'd crossed the French cliffs Below was a patch-work quilt of French fields and woods, looking very much like southern England. It was 6 a.m., and half the world was still in bed We breakfasted at 7 30 a.m., 10,000 feet up—the usual traveller's breakfast of grapefruit, kippers, marmalade, toast, coffee and all that It was all very lovely below us We passed innumerable hamlets, red-roofed all, apparently as near to one another as Chinese villages Ploughed fields seemed to have been thrown down all over the place, like the pieces of thick, rough paper, made of bamboo, which the Chinese set out to dry in the sun beside their farms Everything was so plain and visible that a ploughed field, looking like a sheet of brown paper, gave the only inkling of perspective by which I could judge the area of the landscape.

We were down in an arm of the sea near Marseilles at 9 30, and off again over the Riviera at ten. The town and harbour of Marseilles weren't visible from the airport As we proceeded on our way, I could see San Remo below, where, in 1911, our German liner had struck a rock, and we'd crept like a winged bird, chased by an angry sea, into Genoa. As to the plane itself and the comfort of the journey my diary reads:

"As to weight This isn't like the Guernsey plane, where every pound had to be adjusted You can walk where you like, and what does the difference of a few pounds between one part of the plane and another matter?"

"As to seats. They are adjustable and comfortable The Mediterranean looks as smooth as a pond and we're sailing along on a level keel, with such clouds as there are seeming to be part of the sea. It's rather like looking down on the sky.

"As to noise Those fond of speech will be glad to know there's little more noise than below decks at sea, with the drive of the screw, and we talk in practically ordinary tones "

My companions at this stage were a Jew from Toronto going as fast as he could to Hong Kong "Armaments," thought I; but it wasn't my business to be inquisitive The other was an Airways engineer making for Alexandria to repair a wounded flying-boat. The rest of the permitted weight on the plane was taken up with mail to the Middle and Far East

Over the blue sea we went to Corsica, and had hardly left

Napoleon's island behind before we picked up the Italian coast. After skirting the coast for a while, we turned inland to Lake Brecciano, Rome's airport for flying boats. There seemed to be nothing there but the British Airways installation, and not much of that, but it was a lovely lake—just big enough for the race and leap of a seaplane. We stayed for twenty minutes and were soon in the air again, 11,000 feet up, passing down the Apennines in our journey to Brindisi. The mountains were fairly well wooded, and awesome in their grandeur. There couldn't be much of a living on the shin bone of Italy, as far as I could judge, or on its ankle bone either. This was the country our armies went over in 1944, and no wonder their progress over such mountains seemed slow to our stay-at-home newspaper readers and armchair critics. Some of the foothills were carefully terraced, as in China, but a living must be hard to win from such bleak mountains, with their dried-up tarns. I'd never imagined anything like this before outside Yunnan, and that was somehow different. There we were flying at 12,000 feet, with strong mountains, yawning chasms, and clouds banking themselves beneath us, blotting out everything with their white beauty. Then at last we were across and out of the mountains, bumping along over plains that seemed to get more fertile as we approached the southern coast. There were towns every few miles, with all roads leading to them, but a complete absence of France's China-like hamlets.

Here were rather the scattered farms of England, or so it seemed. Everything, especially what I took to be the vineyards, looked as regular as a piece of knitting. The towns we passed appeared very white. There were no French red tiles and roofs. The farms and villas were dotted all over what appeared to be increasingly fertile country.

We stayed for twenty minutes at Brindisi, caught a glimpse of the harbour, the gun-boats and the naval air-base, and headed for Corfu. This historic and beautiful island reminded me strongly of Cornwall and Guernsey. There were the same blue sea, the same jutting headlands, the same little sandy coves. It was only a few minutes after that before we were over the coast of glorious Greece. I think I must quote the diary here, written as I passed over.

"We're just getting to the entrance to the Gulf of Corinth, with vast mountain masses both right and left of us, and plenty of bumpish possibilities. Greece seems to be all mountains and rocks and sandy water-courses, capable of swelling into wide rivers on

occasion There's a good deal of greenery; and, here and there, scattered villages But what a place for gods to live in They could thunder and roar and look mysterious in their "cloud-capped wrath and punish folks with flood and famine "

And then

"We've just passed Corinth on our right, in the midst of a rich and fertile plain No wonder Bacchus had rather a time of it there To the left is the canal, first made by the ancients Now we are slowing down and bumping into the Gulf of Ægina and so to Athens, well ahead of time "

A Greek guide hustled us off to the Acropolis by car There we had time for one and a quarter hours, some of it in the dark and every moment of it worth while The Parthenon itself is beyond all imagination impressive I shall long remember seeing, in the dying day, two immense pillars silhouetted against the orange sky. They outlined a perfect Greek vase, more than 34 feet high, of fading golden day We were told the usual stories of 10,000 slaves being employed for ten years on this marvel of the world We saw for ourselves how the Parthenon had outlived Roman, Byzantine and Moslem invasion. We saw from its hill the Tragic Theatre of Bacchus, the Temple Hospital of Æsculapius, the Roman Theatre, Hadrian's Arch, the Agora where Paul reasoned and Socrates was condemned to death, the prison where he drank the hemlock, the memorial to Diogenes and the very spot where he lay in his tub Over against the Acropolis was Mars Hill, where, amidst the philosophy and superstition and opposite the great Temple of Athene, the Apostle stood and told the people of the only true God whom they, in ignorance, worshipped You've to see St. Paul there, standing between the close-packed Piræus and the glorious and towering height of Mount Hymettus, before you can realise the greatness of his conviction and the triumph of his faith We'd a good guide—in knowledge, that is Otherwise, he'd seen people like us before; and we, few like him Possibly he was a good father also, but he smelt a little like a devotee of Bacchus We didn't mind him so much making a pretty penny out of us. What are tourists for? But he needn't have sold us poor photographs, as a bargain, in the twilight.

As we left the Acropolis, they turned on the flood-lights and, what we saw in the flood-lit darkness must have been near the beauty of what the old Greeks long ago gazed upon in the sunshine, to their everlasting joy.

We were put up at the Hotel Bretagne, the social centre for all British and American travellers—a magnificent place. In the Greek post-war turmoil, this hotel was General Stobie's headquarters. It was situated on the main thoroughfare of Athens, and everything that had wheels and breath chased raucously up and down it till just on the eve of 3 a.m. As one half dozed, one's bed shook with the rumbling of the buses and trams. The roar of the traffic brought back the roar of the aeroplane engines, and one had the impression of trying to sleep in the plane—much easier done in the plane, as a matter of fact. We were up at 3.30 a.m., after a restless night. What did sleep matter? We'd seen Athens and the matchless beauty of her Parthenon. Months later I was standing on the gleaming white marble of the Altar of Heaven in Peiping. I wondered then, and still wonder, which was the more thrilling of the two experiences. China, the mother of Eastern civilisation, stood there, in the chaste beauty of the matchless splendour and purity of her altar, speaking of the soul of her great people. Greece, mother of Western philosophy, science and medicine, abides in the ruins of Athene's temple amidst her everlasting snow-covered mountains. Who can destroy the eternal hills? What can break the everlasting arms? So began this incredible journey. Southampton, Marseilles, Riviera, Corsica, Rome, Brindisi, Corfu, Corinth and Athens. What an experience for one small human day.

## AN AIRWAYS CAPTAIN AND AN ARAB FRIEND

I FOUND myself at 3.30 a.m. next morning drinking tea and eating fruit with the crew and passengers of a Dutch air-liner, homeward bound. The Dutch have from the first been in the front line of aviation. The famous Fokker, you will remember, was a Dutchman as well as the name of a plane. The Dutch line, as the French, followed the overland route. The routes followed by the Dutch, French and British varied a little, but the aerodromes were often at the same place. There are certain towns and cities in the world that are natural air-line junctions, and Athens is one of them.

Leaving Athens at 4.30 a.m., we never lost sight of land till we reached Mirabella in Crete. If you look at a map you can see how the Cyclades are placed in the sea like a series of giant stepping-stones. It was partly by these islands that the Germans invaded and captured Crete, as well as direct from the air. How little we knew on the journey what was to take place afterwards! All we noted as we flew past them were the giant stepping-stones; and, then, the great mountain mass of Crete, with its two famous harbourages of Mirabella and Suda Bay. Mirabella, being a narrow landlocked inlet, was a tricky landing-place, but we managed it all right. As we flew those 230 miles we had watched a gorgeous sunrise, the sun's disk first red, and in shape like a rugby ball, and then gold. I didn't see Apollo and his horses, but I don't wonder that the Greeks did. Nor did we see the labyrinth nor the strange creature, half-man, half-bull, the Minotaur, that the ancient Greeks said lived in Crete. We remembered old King Minos and the modern Venizelos. For the rest, we remembered the astringent words of St. Paul; and gazed at the humpy mountains, over which we bumped, as we flew off over the Eastern tip of the island, across the calm blue waters of the Mediterranean, on the 370 miles trip to Alexandria.

There we stayed an hour. It was a much bigger place and more attractive than Port Said, the other Egyptian town of which I had some knowledge. That was to be expected. We saw five big bombers, a naval repairs ship and much else in the harbour. We were parked in a resthouse on the water-front whilst the plane

was overhauled, and when we boarded her again we found an entire change of crew. At that time, British Airways kept spare crews for this purpose. Each crew flew for two or three days and then had one or two days' rest. For the days were long, and the strain on those responsible must have been great. The nights, of course, were short and broken.

The new captain had soon made our acquaintance and, noticing I was bound for China, told me that he'd been for three years with Pai Ch'ung-Hsi, the second in command, at the beginning of the Japanese war, to Chiang Kai-shek. The captain told me that he had gone to Hankow on the Aircraft-carrier *Hermes*, subsequently sunk on April 9th, 1942, off Ceylon in the Great War, and had, from there, transferred to the service of the Chinese General. He'd spent his time, he said, training Chinese pilots in the Province of Kuangsi. When war broke out in 1937 he'd had to resign his position. Fancy meeting such a captain of a British Airways plane, I thought. So I'd touched China in Egypt already.

We were soon off again, skirting Africa's sunny, sandy shores, then crossing the blue Mediterranean, flecked here and there with white lines that we judged were breaking waves. We reached the Holy Land at Haifa, and flew over the pipe-line, the oil tanks and the tented soldiery. Within a quarter of an hour we were coming down in the Sea of Galilee and anchored at Tiberias. "That's the place where the pigs came down," said the captain, pointing to steep cliffs on the other side. It was a sheer drop of hundreds of feet. No wonder they were drowned.

As we flew over, I picked out Nazareth and other familiar places. They told me I was wrong about Capernaum, but I'm told there's dispute between two places for the honour of being St Peter's native town. Tiberias is largely a modern town to-day. The snows of Lebanon were gleaming white in the distance. The Plain of Esdraelon was an obvious battle-field and, as I looked down, I quite sympathised with Naaman's feelings about the tiny Jordan. That day the lake was a regular stew-pot for heat and seemed very tiny compared with our great Chinese Poyang and Tung Ting lakes and the Great West Lake of Kunming. After all, it isn't the cradle that matters, but the babe that lies within it. In less than half an hour we were up and away going east over Transjordania and the desert.

As I looked down, hour after hour, I could see hardly anything

but sand. Yet here and there, even in the sand, were signs of men. There were black Bedouin tents; and, near Jordan, great herds of camels were strung out in long lines. Ever and anon, the Persian Oil pipe-line and a motor car or patrolling aeroplane would come into view.

This part of the journey was very bumpy, and the captain climbed to 13,000 feet to avoid the bumps and make things easier for us. Over the Apennines the clock-face had registered 12,000 feet, but we'd been very near the tops of those high mountains, only a few hundred feet away. Here there was a sheer drop of 13,000 feet between the aeroplane and the desert. A man who joined us at Hammadiyeh explained that the desert consists of sand and lava alternately. These substances cooled off at different rates. Hence the varying air-currents and the bumps. As I went home the following year, the pilot told me that no real explanation of the bumpiness there had been discovered. On the return journey the passage here was perfectly smooth. He said it might be due to some condition of wind and atmosphere that, at that date, wasn't known fully. My principle is to "trust the pilot," and I guess his statement was the correct one.

High above the radiating earth, we found it intensely cold. The captain came in to see how we were. "I can switch the fire on if you like," he said. We thought we'd troubles enough, and wrapped ourselves in extra blankets instead. The next port of call was Hammadiyeh, a great lake in the midst of the desert, some forty miles from Bagdad. There was nothing to be seen but water and sand. A strong wind which was blowing raised quite a sea as we sped over the lake in the company's motor-launch. A rest-house for those benighted there was under construction. Ten miles away was the R.A.F. station which became the centre of the Iraqi war on the Allies in 1941. We could see the Royal Air Force planes circling in the air, and didn't envy the fliers the place of their exile. It was getting late and visibility was poor, so we'd not the joy of seeing Bagdad, the enchantress, herself from the air. In the gloaming, we flew over the rich valley of the Tigris and the Euphrates, so much of which had been brought into cultivation after the close of the last war, and the setting up of the Arab Kingdom of Irak. Near where those two rivers converge in their course to the sea is the reputed location of the Garden of Eden. Fancy, in one afternoon, passing from Cleopatra's Egypt, past Galilee and its memories of Jesus, over Bagdad,

with Aladdin and his carpet, and then to Adam and Eve and the Garden down to the great oil port of Basra

It was quite dark when we arrived, and the many-coloured lights which marked the airport made it look like a Christmas tree. When we got to earth, we found a great international air-junction. Italian, German, Dutch, French, British and every other thing that had wings shared its amenities. The hotel and office, air-conditioned, was situated between a landing-ground and the watercourse. As usual, the aerodrome was constructed miles away from the town of Basra itself. We had our dinner on the lawn bordering the water. There were lots of little tables somewhat in the shade, and among them were placed strong lamps. These were a stronger attraction to the many night insects than the human diners otherwise would have been. So it was all very cool and attractive among the many-coloured lights of the air station. At night you regulated the heat of your bedroom by turning a switch. So the hottest and most fearsome station on the whole route had been turned, by human ingenuity, into the most lingering of all our sleeping places. Formerly, the captain said, after a sticky, sleepless scorching night, they'd been glad to get away ahead of schedule. Now there was every reason not to hurry. Basra, also, was "in the news" during the Iraqi incident.

We flew on next morning down the Persian Gulf. At Basra we'd picked up an American oilman. He'd been having a ten days' holiday in the Lebanon and was returning to his work at Bahrein, where next we descended. You'll find Bahrein on the map all right, but I was so ignorant I'd never heard of it before. Have you, I wonder?

The American told us it was 345 miles from Basra to Bahrein, where he lived, and where it was still hotter, he thought. Basra is not only a great oil port, but is busy about other things. It's known particularly for its sweet, honeyed dates, of which it's one of the first centres of the world. Arabia has given us, not only the Moslem faith, but our numerals, our Christmas dates, our taste for coffee and "Arabia's desert ranger"—rather a contribution this to the life of the world. Now she's giving us oil. The Kingdom of Irak is irrigated with oil rather than with water. Such a land is no longer desert. It blossoms as the rose, if beneath its sand is oil. Or does it? Is it not rather the busy foreign merchant who blossoms? The desert remains desert still.

We travelled down the Gulf at 9,000 feet and breakfasted above the clouds. It was a disappointing meal.

I ordered prunes and was given pears. Then, seeing bacon and kidneys on the menu, I forsook the simple kipper and ordered that, thinking it would be very nice to be eating kidneys and bacon 9,000 feet above the Persian Gulf. But it was not to be. When the steward opened his vessels he found sausages instead of kidneys. He was very apologetic, but I had to be content with mere sausages and bacon.

"Bahrein," I wrote—in 1939, remember—"turns out to be one of the greatest world sources of the pearl industry, and is now hit by the Japanese artificial pearl competition." Was it the American who told me that? He was certainly my informant for what follows.

"To-day there's something more precious than pearls. The Americans have found oil and they think it's going to be the greatest oilfield yet discovered. Our American friend is a borer, he says. Because of this oil find, there are on these two little twenty-mile islands some 600 foreigners besides two closely packed Arab towns in Arabia, which we can see across the narrow neck of water, there are another 400. The foreigners have air-conditioned houses, cinemas, wireless, and all possible that can be done for their comfort. The company is American, but the charter was granted on condition that over 50 per cent of the employees were British."

So there'll be at least 501 British subjects to 499 Americans. These islands were intensely hot in the morning sun and, except for oil, looked pretty much like a God-forsaken hole. The famous Arabian publicist and scholar, Dr. Szwemer, once lived at Bahrein, and his daughter, the wife of a missionary in Hankow, was born there, so her husband told me when I reached Hankow in the following year. So conditions may have been better than they seemed.

At Bahrein we had only five or ten minutes ashore on a harbour strip surrounded by the sea. We watched the fish swimming in the green, transparent waters. There was a swarthy merchant who tried to sell us goodly pearls, but what good were pearls to a traveller making for troubled China? The American said "Good-bye" and was replaced by an Arab in white robe and burnous, who brought on board a white vessel or two, the size and shape of an average flower pot, but filled with pearls. Their total value

must have been quite considerable He spoke good English, said he'd been born and brought up in Bombay, and had never learned English at school That was his sixth trip by air, he told us Think of that, you stay-at-homes My Jew companion was on his fifth trip and I only on my second Some part of our conversation may be of interest

*T* "Where have you come from?"

*A* Saudi Arabia."

*T* "That's where Ibn Saud lives, isn't it?"

*A* (with interest) "Yes Do you know him?"

*T* "No But I've read about him There's a Penguin Book about him called 'The Lion of Arabia' He has 400 motor cars, hasn't he?"

*A* "No, not 400 He has 1,500 cars and forty-five wireless stations"

*T* "What does he need them for?"

*A* "They are his eyes and his ears If there is trouble, he can use his lorries and deal swiftly with it"

*T* "Have you come by car?"

*A* "Yes It took me two days"

*T* "How long would the journey have been by camel?"

*A* "Twenty-eight days."

*T* "Are the roads good enough for cars?"

*A* "Yes Quite good We'd no great difficulty You're an Englishman, aren't you?"

*T* "Yes I'm an Englishman"

*A* "Well, what are you going to do about Palestine? We don't want the Jews there Turn them out and leave it to us"

*T* "But it's their home Why should we turn them out? Where else can they go?"

*A* "Send them to Australia or where you like, but get them out of Palestine That belongs to us"

*T* "Well, this is very fortunate Here we are up here, three men in a plane—an Arab, a Jew and an Englishman I'll take the Chair, and you two thrash it out When we've solved the problem, I'll send on the solution to Mr Chamberlain, and he'll be glad to have it"

It was as long ago as that, you see

*A* "No, no It's Britain's problem, not ours You must solve it"

Before we parted at Karachi, he took me aside and said "I'm

not worried It doesn't bother me, but Britain must do something about these Italian and German broadcasts " This was in August, 1939, remember "They don't disturb me But they're doing a lot of harm They disturb the people's minds Britain must do something. Goodbye."

It was this conversation that made me, after war was declared in September, expect trouble in the desert. Doubtless our soldiers and politicians were watching it too. When trouble broke out at Hammadiyeh, Bagdad and Basra in 1941 I thought of my Arab friend again After all, oil to-day is more precious than rubies. It had much to do with German and British strategy, and an Arab over the Persian Gulf had forewarned me of what was coming.

That scene, above the snow-like carpet of clouds over the Persian Gulf and under the blue and sunny skies, of three men in an aeroplane, all travelling on urgent business, is an epitome of the modern world There we were, a Canadian-Jew business man, an Arab travelling trader, a British missionary to China Air travel is, in its very nature, international The nations are brought together into one place. They must mingle and be friends or what will become of us. At various stretches of my journey, out and back, my companions were British, American, Greek, Egyptian, Jew, Arab, Burman, Chinese, Hindu, German, French We were together in one place, sharing a common experience, travel and life. It was a little world in that aeroplane; yet how like the larger world that lay beneath us and was soon to burst into flames If only we could have solved the Palestine problem in the air, it could have been solved upon the earth. But we didn't solve it that day; we only realised how it needed to be solved He had said these very words, as far as I recollect them: "We're very tired of Germany's and Italy's wireless propaganda, which is bad and dangerous. We're your friends, but you must be friendly to us and not go on with your wrong policy in Palestine The Mufti of Jerusalem is too big a man to be ostracised, and he really represents Arab opinion " Well, it was one man's judgment, anyway How naïve and helpful to throw all the burden of solution on Great Britain Solomon was a Jew and is greatly honoured amongst the Moslems How will you find anyone with the wisdom of Solomon in Britain? Yet again, why not?

The rest of that day's journey is soon told After Bahrein, we came down for refuelling at Sharjah, in Oman, the north-eastern



The Shwe Dagon, Rangoon    This Pagoda, as high as the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, is covered with gold leaf



Some of Burma's  
hundred tribes  
Lahu village family



Palaung women See  
the bamboo hoops  
round their waists

tip of Arabia Local fighting in the hinterland was going on between various groups of Arabs Apart from that, there were dhows and fishing boats, black tents, camels and general congestion It looked hot and the only scenery was sand So, for once, we stayed on board and were glad to be up in the cool air again, but even Sharjah had wireless receiving sets, as we learned on our homeward journey After leaving Oman, it was like the burning fiery furnace, except that it was also humid, and soon we were riding over a beautiful world of clouds and looking at the mountains of Persia through the clouds on our left What those sheiks were fighting about in Oman passed my understanding There seemed pretty little to fight about, except more and more rock and sand and burning heat We rode over the silver lining of miles of clouds for hours, and then descended to Jirwani in Baluchistan and saw the heavy black under-side of those same clouds that had only brought rain twice in six months At Jirwani was being rapidly built an airways station, amidst desolation of sand and water and dry wind What dreadful places some of our airmen are called to live in, for the sake of Empire and of commerce Although all may be done for them that money can buy, they're short of the unpurchasables There aren't many mission stations more isolated than Jirwani, but the British Airways ground staff were good to see "Strategic," the captain murmured, and I thought about that a lot during the Great War

Soon we were up and off again with more sunshine overhead, more silvery, snowy clouds beneath our plane, more mountains of Baluchistan or North India in the far distance Then at 5 p m we dropped right through the clouds and saw Karachi and its well-arranged harbour below us

Karachi is quite a modern settlement for Europeans, and there had evidently been some town planning We came down in a fine harbour, and I found G waiting for me at the Customs House and wondering what it was all about He'd had the cable about my coming and hadn't any other information about my visit, so suddenly had the journey been arranged. When I assured him I was just paying an evening call, he was good enough to run me round the city in his not too luxurious car I found that Karachi was not all town planning, but a collection also of Singapore-ish shops There in its streets were India's people with their caste marks on their foreheads There also were bullocks and goats in abundance, and camels drawing lorries as though they'd been

shire-horses Not the way, this, to treat the "ship of the desert," I thought

I looked over this busy chaplain's work—his church and institute, and his welcome to the soldier lads from home. It was refreshing to have a quiet, homely meal with a comrade in work and his wife. We're a great family around the world. I hadn't seen them before and had small hopes of seeing them again. This is one of the unpurchasable privileges that such folk enjoy. Comrades in a common task, they, though strangers, are at home.

Then I went off to my hotel to be ready for an early call. Between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. my dirty clothes had been washed and ironed and returned. Wonderful person, that Indian *dhobi*, and a very present help to every traveller. Thus ended the morning and the evening of the third most glorious and illuminating day.

### III

#### THE FACE OF MOTHER INDIA

EVERY traveller to Australia and the Far East knows Colombo, with its deep-sea harbour For hours, if the wind is in the right direction, he's inhaled the spicy breezes of Ceylon, blown to him over the ocean Ceylon is not India, whatever the traveller may imagine Ask the Ceylonese, with his national consciousness and independence, and his proud Buddhist and Sinhalese civilisation Ceylon possesses a very varied population and all the races of India, if not of the world, are to be found in this beautiful island

On voyage after voyage I'd gone ashore at Colombo and admired her red roads and her green foliage Ceylon's road system is said to be one of the best in the world I'd seen the Indian conjuror performing amazing feats out of nothing, in front of the Galle Face Hotel I'd been a welcome guest at the Colpetty Mission Compound and at the great Wesley College I'd visited the Cinnamon Gardens at Mount Lavinia, wandered among the coconut palms and gloried in the huge waves breaking on the golden shore I'd wandered around the town sufficiently to know that Colombo was not all groves and villas and spicy breezes I'd been down to the old town and the old Dutch quarters and seen the "oldest church in Asia" On country road, in dock area, or congested slum quarter, I'd seen the many-coloured Indians, with varied ceremonial marks upon their foreheads, mingling with the throng of the people of many nations Once I'd witnessed a great concourse of saffron-robed Buddhist monks, with shaven crowns, and had passed the buildings of the Y M B A —Buddhism's answer, in Ceylon, to the Christian activities of youth Of course, I'd been to the curio shops and possessed myself of some of those little carved black-wood elephants that you find upon the mantelpiece or sideboard of every traveller who has ever touched Colombo

Yet, for all its Indians, Ceylon isn't India It's the land of Buddha really For up on the hills, at Kandy, among the tea plantations, is the famous temple of Buddha's tooth Buddha, the Hindu reformer, has no foothold now in his native land His only remains in India are temple ruins Over Burma, Thailand, Thibet,

China and Japan his religion is widely spread, but nowhere more proudly and demonstratively than over Ceylon, unless it be in Burma

Yet in Ceylon I'd at least caught a glimpse of India.

I had met her more intimately one sunny afternoon when our ship had berthed in Bombay. Some of my fellow passengers had sped around for an hour or two in a hired car. We'd seen her "satanic mills" inactive in the years of depression, owing partly to the cheapness of Japan's imports. We'd climbed the Malabar Hill from which we'd gazed over the city. We'd seen the carrion birds circling over the famous "Towers of Silence," where the rich and powerful, but tiny, Parsee community lay their dead. No coffins were used for them and no funeral pyres. The birds of the air were their burial corps and the Towers were a perpetual object of interest to all travellers. We'd walked in Bombay's streets and felt the sense of multitude. We'd noticed the different shades of the darkness of men's skins, as well as the caste-marks upon their foreheads and the many-coloured clothes upon their bodies. We'd also experienced insufferable heat after the fresh sea breezes of our voyage. That was all I'd ever seen of India, Mother India, and now I was flying across from Karachi to Calcutta. You can imagine how thrilled I was at the prospect of that day's flight.

It took almost exactly the same time to fly from west to east of northern India as it had taken to fly across Europe from Southampton to Athens. That gives you some measure of India's size. Put France and Italy and Greece together and the intervening seas, and there you have the width of India. To us she's just India, another country. Perhaps that is why we're so unaware of her problems and her seeming intractability. By European standards of size and population, India's a continent rather than a country, with all the racial and religious diversity of a continent. Flying across Europe, we'd halted on that first day at Marseilles, Breciano and Brindisi before we arrived at Athens. In India, too, we made three stops before we finally alighted in the Hoogly at Calcutta.

It was rather a beautiful sight leaving Karachi in the dark that morning, with harbour and street lights lining out the town. As it grew light, we found ourselves over the Desert of Sind and so continued for most of the 434 miles, till we came to the Aravalli Range and the holy lake of Raj Sammand.

The Sind Desert was very unlike the deserts of Assyria and Arabia. There was sandy hill and plain, but almost everywhere trees were growing, scattered about, but evidently large and life-sustaining. For there were many, villages, like African kraals, walled around. Within each walled enclosure were a dozen or more conical, circular houses. We could see white cattle too. So some sort of life was possible for tree and man and beast, but it must be almost as famished as the Arab's. One wondered, "If so much life, why not more?" The answer probably is the inconstancy of the rain.

Raj Sammand, our first stop, was a dream of a lake where pilgrims come for worship. British Airways had an installation there and were allowed to use it for their flying-boats. To stand on the 300 years old stone facing on which the Airways office is installed, to see the *Canopus* down in the lake against the blue of the water, the gleaming white of the "palace of the high priest of the Maharajah of Udaipur" built, on the bank of the lake, the green of the hillside and the blue heavens above, was some compensation for the almost continuous bumping of the plane as we came along over the desert.

How solemnly and reverently the bespectacled Indian clerk had given, in perfect English, that description of the gleaming palace. So this was India, new as well as old, where an Indian had spoken of his high priest with a reverence and respect that I'd never heard man or woman in Britain use of bishop or archbishop. There's something to make you think.

It was a day of bumps, for we were in monsoon weather, and you never knew where the wind was going to catch you next. We had our air-stomachs by then, corresponding to sea-legs in other circumstances. So I just strapped myself into my chair, and wrote my diary, though it was too jerky to do that before Gualior, where we came down next.

The Maharajah of Gualior was evidently a progressive man. He'd thrown a great dam across a valley and made an artificial lake for British Airways. This made one of the best landing-places we had used. In consequence, he'd diverted the air traffic. Of this I was glad as we sailed through the air, over his beautifully laid-out palace and capital, which was much more attractive from the air than even Karachi had been.

We sped on to Allahabad. The monsoon clouds came scudding up to meet us. We crossed a tributary of the Jumna River,

half-way on this stage of the journey. As we neared Allahabad, we could see green, pleasant and well-watered country through the rifts of the racing, wind-blown clouds that were above, around and beneath us. What a switchback of a journey it had become, and how different from our air life over the ocean wave, where air currents seemed to be even and, if need be, you sailed high above the clouds. Still, who wants life to be one long monotony? We could see the River Jumna winding in and out below us as we sped along. Finally, we rested on the bosom of holy Mother Ganges at Allahabad, "the City of God," where Jumna and Ganges meet. I wondered what the clouds had thought, getting their insides ripped open with our motors. That was a clash of old and young, modern West and ancient East. Old Mother Ganges too, at this point, was spanned by a couple of heavy modern steel bridges, making Allahabad accessible to the outside world in any weather. We were, as usual, far from the city and only as we climbed again, after refuelling, could we look down on its streets and buildings which, from the air, looked very beautiful with innumerable trees and spaciousness. Did all cities appear beautiful from the air, I wondered? Does height, as well as distance, lend enchantment to the view?

From Allahabad we flew onwards the next 455 miles to Calcutta steadily at some 2,000 feet. This was the lowest we'd been on continuous flight, and men, women and the beasts of the field were all distinguishable. I could see the villages proper, well-built, red-tiled and then, on the outskirts, a cluster of mud-huts where the outcastes—or was it the cattle?—lived. The many-coloured plain seemed to be cultivated every inch. It was like, and yet unlike, the China I'd known. In some places it is more, and in others less, well-wooded. The Yangtse has not, as far as I know, anywhere such an extended well-cultivated plain as lay beneath us. We'd passed over the 400 miles of rich alluvial soil. No wonder, I thought, that simple peasants worshipped the Ganges if they thought she was the author, and not the agent merely, of such transformation. The wilderness of the awesome mountains had been changed into the fertile fields of the Ganges basin. After all, we had dragons in our Chinese rivers, so men said, and sometimes, when roofs were ripped bodily from our houses and hurled hundreds of yards away, the Chinese called it the flipping of the dragon's tail. Country folks know of the mysterious and uncontrollable good and evil forces of Nature, and perhaps Chinese

coolie and Indian peasant were not far removed from one another in their fears and in their pleasures

We rolled and tossed about, so that it was difficult to write, but it was lovely to see and easy to dream. It was all so near. You felt you could almost call to them. I saw a man driving a herd of cattle, and others in the muddy mess of the fields planting out their rice. I could distinguish pools by the side of the large villages and the larger houses built, as in China, round an inner courtyard. In one such courtyard a man and woman stood together gazing up at us—he tall and she gorgeous in a red *sari*. In my mind's eye, I see them staring still. There stood tall palms and the tree-skirted roads wound their course beneath us. There was the patchwork quilt of paddy fields at the various stages of the growing rice. This was the India I'd long dreamed to see. She lay beneath my feet, so near I could almost touch her—all but the souls of her people.

The biggest and most attractive town we passed was the city of Sundipur. There must be scores and hundreds of cities such as this, each with a beauty and a life of its own. Round about were some strangely formed volcanic hills, part the work of Nature and part the work of man, they seemed. We passed over miles and miles of wooded hills. Was this jungle? Would the wild beasts please oblige? If they saw us, I don't suppose they thought much of our four Douglas engines or all the comforts and delights of the *Canopus* and her doings.

The captain came down for a cup of tea. I wonder if he remembers. I wonder if he's still alive. I wonder if, in the Great War, he became a wing-commander, an air- commodore or what? I wonder if this man who trained Chinese pilots in Kueichow became a trainer of pilots in Great Britain. Will he or his ever read these lines?

*Captain* "Well, do you think we earn our half-crown?"

*Passenger* "I think it must be a terrific strain. You certainly earn your rest."

*Captain* "It's been one constant battle with the storm. There's a tremendous cloud formation up there, some 20,000 to 30,000 feet of it. I daren't go up into that or we might never come out."

So that was why he'd kept her on a steady keel at 2,000 feet, much to my satisfaction. Fancy being able to watch men and women in their *saris* from the aeroplane, even though they be as pins walking. That day we'd experienced all sorts of weather—

wind, cloud, sunshine, rain, mist Anyhow, we hadn't snow or frost or lightning. So that was something to be thankful for. Yet, if it hadn't been for the monsoon we shouldn't have seen India as we did see her Yes, we'd seen India, the real India Sand and desert, mountains and streams, plains, that give life more abundant; or, being unwatered by the monsoon, become broken hopes and haunts of famine. Above all, India's innumerable villages, caste and outcaste, mosques and temples; India's modern railways and bridges and new industrial towns As we approached the Delta, there seemed to be water, water everywhere and wind and scudding cloud beneath, around and above us These three full days I seem to have seen all the kingdoms of the world But there were other kingdoms still, three or four more yet before the journey was done

As, at 5 p m that evening, we lighted on the Hoogly at Calcutta, I felt as though "Eternal Father, strong to save" would never be complete for me again until some inspired poet had added a verse for all airmen everywhere

I was met by old friends and colleagues from England We'd the usual half-hour's taxi ride from the water to our hotel and were detained by a traffic jam As we neared Calcutta, crossed a huge bridge and entered its crowded thoroughfares, it was a colourful sight that met our eyes Trams hurtled along There were motor cars and bullock carts, dark-skinned burden-bearers and pedestrians in coloured raiment. All the colours of the rainbow and many more were worn upon their backs, and on their foreheads the marks of their gods or of their castes. Straying among the thronged populace upon the street were sacred bulls or cows Should one of them feel tired and settle down upon the tramway lines, there was an immediate block of the traffic till it could be persuaded to get up and move again. No violence must be used upon a sacred beast So ancient faith and superstition and modern science meet Apart from this, traffic so dense was bound to cause a jam from time to time Calcutta for me will ever have its memories of multitudes—multitudes upon its roads, many-coloured multitudes; and of beast and man, bullock-cart and motor, and every moving thing that man can devise, all pouring in an endless stream, all at their own pace, in a wide but closely congested street.

I was taken to the Maidan, Calcutta's amazing recreation ground—really the cleared space around the old Fort William,

where the garrison used to keep guard There were acres and acres of it where, on a breathless humid evening, Calcutta could draw breath There were football grounds and cricket grounds, and open spaces enough for all On one side was the Curzon Memorial to Queen Victoria—an impressive and beautiful monument of white marble Curzon and all his magnificent imperialism seem strangely out of date to-day He was the imperial Viceroy *par excellence*

My friend S then took me to his Sudder Street Church, a proof of local interest and generosity then, a home that never seemed to close, working night and day for the welfare of our men in the war that has since come

The monsoon through which we travelled had just brought to Calcutta ten days of rain, the longest and most continuous for ten long years One of my colleagues in Calcutta had wondered if my sudden arrival had had anything to do with an important letter he'd sent home recently Then I remembered that it was only on the Monday morning that that letter was being discussed in Liverpool I'd left London on the Tuesday night and Southampton before dawn on Wednesday, and here I was on Saturday evening in Calcutta, having already traversed wellnigh half the world

Calcutta was very steamy, though they called it cool As I left next morning, I took with me mental pictures of her wide, well-laid-out streets, her innumerable and colourful people, her lumbering bullock wagons, and her cattle lying about in the dark, empty streets through which we threaded our way to the *Canopus*, our heavenly home Soon we were aloft again, passing for an hour or so over the watery delta of the Hoogly on our way across the Bay of Bengal to Akyab

## GOLD PAGODA AND BUDDHIST PONGYIS

As we flew over the blue sea of the Bay of Bengal, the passenger liner below us, travelling probably at a good fifteen or eighteen knots, seemed to be standing still. Yet we could see from the foam at her wake she was making good speed. Here, over the Bay, the blue heavens were sprinkled with cirrus cloud. For the first time in my life I realised that at the heart of such clouds was wind. As we moved along we were a little like a ball bouncing on a floor. Each time we hit one of those fleecy clouds we seemed to bounce up and then pursue our way. It was quite a pleasant game with the sprites of the air, this bouncing through the clouds. I checked this experience up with a pilot, and he confirmed my guess that the wind, in such a cloud, makes a more solid block of air than the surrounding atmosphere, and that it really was a matter of bouncing along. It was great fun, somewhat like bathing in the surf on African or Australian shore, perhaps. It was 338 miles to Akyab, where we came down about 8 a.m. Akyab, half-way between Calcutta and Rangoon, was prominent in the war. It is, amongst other things, a distribution centre for the Burmah Oil Company and a refuelling station for British Airways. Akyab's rainfall is 200 inches per annum, and it collects most of that between June and September, thanks to the monsoons. Its houses looked very snug, lying amidst the trees and the greenery of one of Nature's hot-houses. I wondered what it felt like to be an exile there. After all, it was by the sea and unlike our inland and humid Yangtse Valley. Yet we had our winter and our snow and they only their wet season and their dry season, when presumably it rains a little less. From Akyab we raced along at 6,000 feet, over sea and islands, then sea again, and, finally, the shore.

It was all very beautiful as we coursed through the cold, rushing mist and rain. Through the rifts we could see cloud masses and blue sky above and, every now and then, the patchwork of woods and fields and rivers below. "We are passing over the wide Irrawaddy valley in our frail storm-tossed barque. Below us now are wooded mountains covered with a broken quilt of cotton wool. Here and there, we see the sun is shining down below as on these

clouds above We're too high to see the smaller details, but what we see is very beautiful and ever green ”

It was a glorious cloud effect to finish up that first stage of my journey The monsoon had been very kind to me, just shown enough of its strength to let us see how frail we were, and then showed us the beauty that was coupled with the strength We crossed thickly-wooded mountains, and then, as we reached the Irrawaddy delta, gradually reduced our height to fly over the wet plain, apparently as broad in extent as the Hoogly delta, but variegated with fields and trees and winding watercourses All the plain seemed rain-soaked, but the Burmans weren't worrying Why should they? Out of these rich plains they reap three harvests of rice a year—so huge a gathering that half of it may be sold to India and other hungry places

As we circled over Rangoon, we got a glimpse of the Shwe Dagon, the famous Gold Pagoda How little had the worshippers dreamed that one day their famous shrine would be a landmark for pilots of the air to steer by

Here we were, arrived at last in the Rangoon River In a few minutes we were racing up the river in the Airway Company's fast motor-boat Long before we reached the Customs jetty, the *Canopus* was up and away again, on her course to Bangkok, Singapore and Australia As she faded into the cloud, she looked as small and insignificant as a bird in distant flight So that was all the impression we'd made, we who had felt, in our cushioned chairs, as though all the kingdoms of the world were ours *Sic transit gloria mundi*

S met me with a great welcome Here was I to stay for a little time and he was to show me what could be seen of Burma in a week But first I must send a message home

R “Will they think me quite mad if I wire the two words, ‘Hallelujah Rattenbury’?”

S “No, I don't think so It's what I wired when I heard my daughter had safely arrived”

The Burmese telegraph clerk wasn't so sure They looked like code words, he thought, with their ten strange letters, and code words were forbidden in that hour of political tension So I had to write solemnly at the bottom of the cable form “These are not code words They are Bible words” Whether I wrote in the singular or plural, I've forgotten Anyway, there was no further hindrance My message was duly despatched, and for those who

want to be accurate, my name is on the fly-leaf of a Bible here and there

One takes one's missionary friends for granted One goes right into their hearts and homes But I didn't anticipate the abounding and lavish hospitality of the city accountant, M , and his wife, both then and later It's to be hoped—and I've no doubt—that Burma contains many civilians as open-hearted as they But if I could hear of others more kindly, I'd count it cheap to fly across the world to be their guest

I came to Burma with great expectations As a youth I'd read Henry Fielding's *Soul of a People* Whether true or untrue, how was I to know? Somehow, it had opened a window for me into this land I never dreamed to visit Still, I gathered, it was something of a classic.

Then an old resident had charmed me with his pictures of the colour, the sunshine and the carefreeness of Burma and her people Still others had talked in more sombre tones of this land content with its rice, its rubies, its cheroots and its essentially pessimistic faith I was eager to see all the people and all the places that could be compassed in a week

It was 10 a.m Sunday, August 6th, when I'd dropped to earth again. Most of that day I was the guest of American missionaries. I've seen a lot of this great race in China, and I got to the point where I hardly knew whether it was a man of British or American race with whom I kept company There's a crust of different tradition and approach to be broken through, but our common humanity is very near and clear They asked me to speak in their evening service, and that's where I began to see Burma What a mingling of the nations there was in that church that evening. Americans, British, Burmans, Chinese, Indians, Anglo-Indians, Anglo-Burmans—there they all were At supper they told me of services in Telugu, Tamil, Hindustani and Chinese as well as Burmese and English that some of them had attended in Rangoon that day. Such is part of the conglomeration of races in Rangoon, Mandalay and other centres of population. No fewer than 130 indigenous languages are spoken every day by Burma's 17 million people, apart altogether from sixty foreign languages of the stranger within her gates In China the great bulk of the 460 million people have one tradition, one civilisation, one common life, one speech Nothing could have presented a greater contrast to me than this diversity of tribes and nations that has somehow to

find a unity in Burma I'd known that there was a constant influx of Chinese from Yunnan over the mountains as well as Chinese immigrants from the sea, but this first glimpse of the multi-raced and multi-coloured inhabitants of Burma remains dominant to this day

The Shwe Dagon, the Golden Pagoda, was evidently something not to be missed, and before we left for Mandalay we made our pilgrimage there

"This tremendous and beautiful shrine is solid brick, coated from pinnacle to base with gold leaf. It's just a glorified cairn, and is said, at the first, to have grown as a cairn grows, by the devout adding stone on stone and gift to gift. Round its base was a marble pavement. Outside the pavement were many ornate shrines, the gifts of one and another, containing the Buddha of Burma, a figure quite different from the Chinese Buddha, and yet recognisably the same. One shrine alone had cost 800,000 rupees (£60,000), no small gift for any faithful soul."

To my amazement, I saw a Japanese walking round the shrine clad in the saffron robes of a *pongyi*, a Burmese monk. As he walked, he kept striking a curious-shaped Burmese gong and calling "Ah!"

Our guide told us that this man went round the pavement seven times a day. He'd the arms and physique of a prize-fighter. His face seemed hard and set. Why should a Japanese monk be performing in Rangoon? What did he do with his spare time? Why hadn't he forsaken the world, as a good Buddhist should?

The answer I was given was that what the *pongyis* say to-day Burma will say to-morrow. In Rangoon there were said to be 20,000 monks, and in Mandalay 10,000. Throughout the country there were at least 100,000. In the religious and political riots of 1938, they told me, it was the *pongyis* that led, and the guest-rooms of this very temple were the hosteries where the revolutionary leaders took counsel. This isn't to condemn the monks, whose power was so immense, but it may explain why a Japanese devotee discarded his Japanese gown and donned the robe of the *pongyi*. He knew where real power in Burma resided, he knew the allies he must seek if the walls of his Jericho were to be overthrown. In 1946 this incident doesn't seem so strange as it did six years ago.

The Golden Pagoda rises stately and beautiful into the air to the height of the dome of St Paul's Cathedral. It is solid masonry.

There are no accessible chambers within, though somewhere under the massive pile there's said to be a relic of Gautama Buddha. The pagoda stands on the brow of a low hill, which gives it even greater prominence. The entrance was up a long, ascending colonnade. There were shops and stalls on both sides of the steps and guest-rooms behind. There was much buying and selling in these temple courts. S and I went up barefoot, as is the Burmese custom. This annoys the average foreigner, but it seemed to me to be more natural and courteous than trampling the steps and courts with heavy boots. After all, no one asked us to go. Yet leprosy and other foul diseases walk that way, and it's well to wash your feet as soon as may be when you leave.

There was no incense and few signs of worship that I could see, and only one family kneeling on the marble pavement and reciting prayers before a shrine. There were few *pongyis* about. The Shwe Dagon, as most Burmese temples, I was told, was under the charge of temple trustees—laymen and not monks.

That famous pagoda was a great witness to the devotion, faith and works of Buddhists. On that day, at least, it was no centre of worship. I've lingered long over this great pagoda, with its priceless gold-covered dome. It's the greatest thing in Burma, all agree, and symbolic of the greatest power within the land. Burma is crowded with pagodas as other lands with idols, and the great mass of pagodas that I saw seemed to derive from the Shwe Dagon. There are countless idols too, of course, but to the traveller it's the universality of the pagoda that is memorable. China has her lovely, many-storied pagodas only here and there, Burma has hers by their thousands and tens of thousands.

The rest of the day we spent visiting—amongst other places, the University with its famous Judson College and the Cathedral with its bronze tablet to the Blind Jackson, "Blind Eagle" as he's called. I was told that Burmese blind were often to be seen in the Cathedral porch, fingering the embossed bronze tablet of that man who came from Britain and lived and died, blind himself, among them for their enlightenment. The China Travel Service, the Thomas Cooks of China, was represented in Rangoon. The Chinese agent, who'd been at the previous evening service, was able to give me information about the inns and organisation of the Burma and other new roads, which I fully verified in the travels through China of the following seven or eight months. That China Travel Service, 100 per cent Chinese, compared

favourably for courtesy and efficiency with any similar organisation in the world that I've ever met You can test that out in China when you come

Down by the docks, I saw hundreds of military lorries ready for transport to China as soon as the rains ceased The highest number that I noted was 8,173 Trainloads of them were constantly passing up to Lashio to be ready I spoke to Chinese chauffeurs who'd volunteered from Singapore, eager to share in their country's fortunes

We boarded the train for the north at tea-time, and after passing miles and miles of rice-land, temples, pagodas, Buddhas and Burmese wooden houses set on stilts, we slept through the darkness and found ourselves at a point on the Irrawaddy called Myn Gyan at early dawn Here we took boat to Pakokku This rail-and-water route saved our precious time An Irrawaddy steamer would have brought us in great style 500 miles from Rangoon to Mandalay in six glorious days The route we chose took three, and that included an afternoon and evening at Pakokku with other colleagues and friends

We reached Myn Gyan when the world was just awakening. We saw the *pongyis* sallying forth in saffron robes and each with his black begging bowl as big as a large fruit bowl balanced on his hand There were many of them going on their various beats through this town of 20,000 souls We took a *gharry*, drove past pagodas and a monastery, passing people all dressed in caps and *longyis* (skirts) of many colours Both sexes wore the *longyi*, but each in a different and characteristic way How the Burmese love varied colours, and we loved them too for the charm of their smiles as well as of their bright-coloured skirts and caps

We enjoyed the amenities of a Government rest-house, such as is common in India as well as Burma, and for which my Chinese travel in inns had not prepared me Were we more democratic in China, I wondered? Anyhow, I enjoyed this added comfort to a country journey

This first sight of Burma was a great rush A busy night and morning among hospitable comrades at Pakokku was followed by a night and day steaming on the turgid waters of the flooded Irrawaddy How like and unlike the Yangtse it was We passed the same muddy water, the same flooded houses Cattle and people here as there, were isolated and standing or sitting quietly on any dry hillock or unflooded roof waiting for the waters to go down

The only beings thoroughly enjoying themselves were the herons, with their long beaks, white bodies, black wings, yellow tail-coats and ridiculously dignified tread I fancy I'd seen that heron-step in England once and again. Did the Guards come to Burma in the good old days, I wondered?

On our way upstream we anchored at many-pagodaed Ava, an old capital city, and at Sagaing, twelve miles from Mandalay. At Sagaing on the low foothills for a mile or two were white-and-gold pagodas interspersed with lovely modern villas. There were terraces, too, and gleaming white steps. Here, they told me, lived some 8,000 monks. Yet it wasn't a monastery in the ordinary sense, but a monks' "Retreat," and a very lovely one. I was told that amongst the 8,000 were men of culture who, in their older years, had retired to Sagaing that they might rest and meditate.

As far as I know, there's nothing even faintly resembling this in all the Buddhism of China, not even in the Sacred Mountains or in the pilgrim isle of Pootoo. Meditation, retreat, hermitage and lonely temple are there in China in abundance, but a permanent retreat for 8,000 *pongrys*—who would have thought of it if they hadn't seen it?

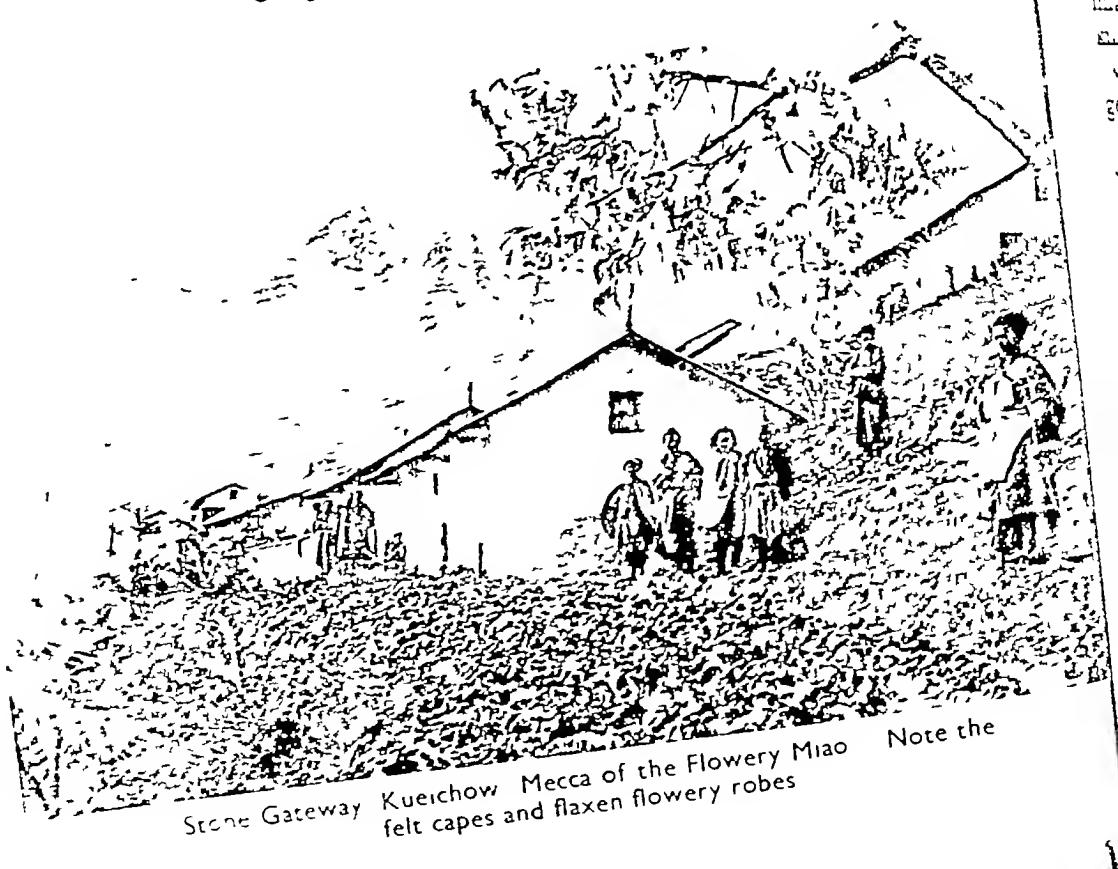
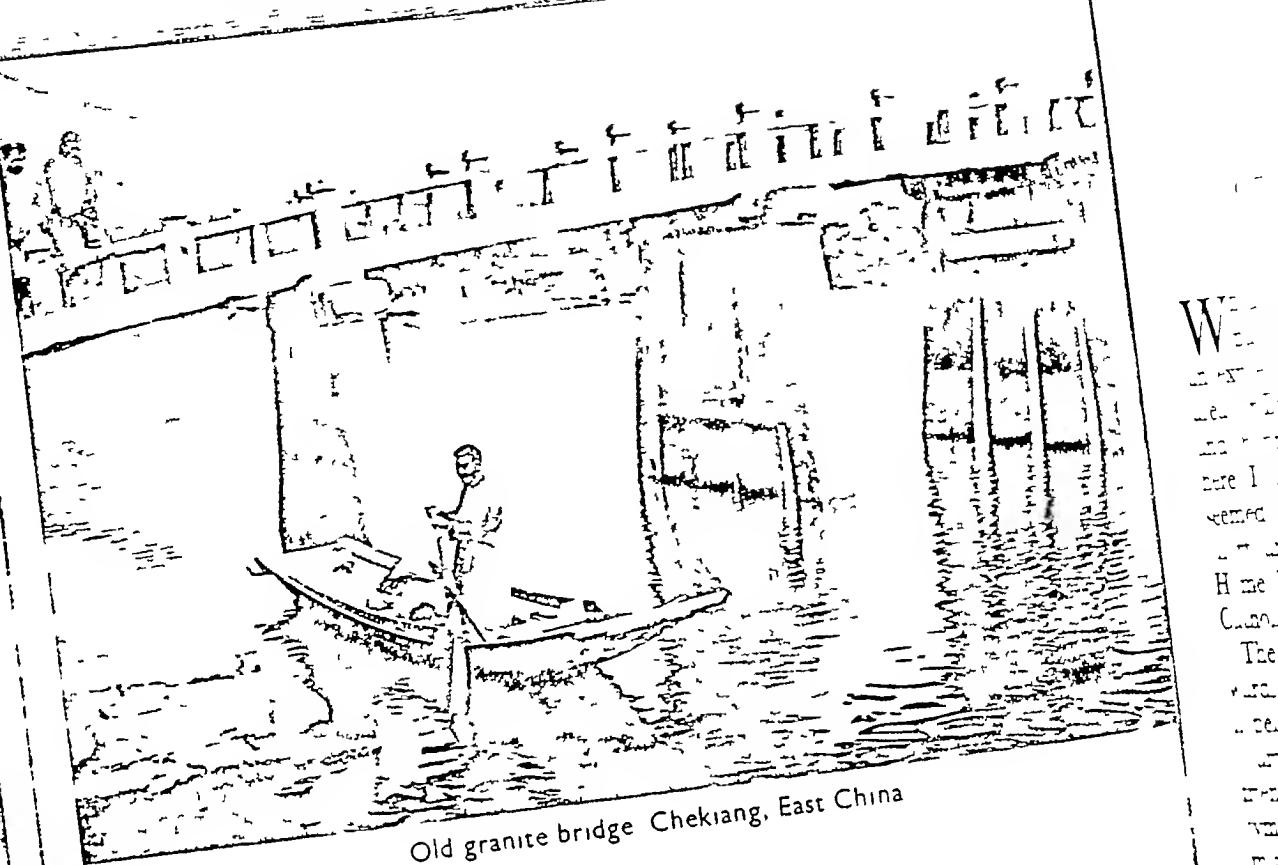
Rain blotted out the low hills beyond Mandalay as we approached, but had stopped before we reached the bank. I can see the swirl of that obscuring rain to-day.

This embarrassing group of English men and women who came to meet me might have been Burmese for the joy and gladness of their welcome. It was real home away from home.

And it was Mandalay. Not the city of which Kipling wrote to fit in with his rhyming jingle—but Mandalay, the city of the great kings, they said. So they gave me a royal welcome.



Village child, Kiangsi. The family clothes are "shai-ing,"  
"airing in the sun."



OF KINGS AND MONKS, OF LEPERS  
AND OF SAINTS

WE drove up to the Mission House through the "Civil Lines," past school and church, all in ruins to-day "Civil Lines," an expression unknown to me in China, means the residential area for British and other exiles, as distinct from the regular town and shopping area and from the military quarters Fossil history, here, I supposed I'd met the phrase first in Pakokku, and there seemed to be such a section in most towns of Burma Time was short, and I used what was left of daylight in visiting our Leper Home There was another larger home nearby run by the Roman Catholics

The institution was set on somewhat swampy ground The wards were delightfully airy and clean There were some quite hopeless cases Others were "burnt out", the disease had run its course and would do no more harm to these patients or to their friends Others were hopeful of a cure and some were already symptom-free I wondered what bearing flies and mosquitoes might have on the speed of the cure A good Buddhist, of course, kills neither fly nor mosquito, and they must swarm in that swampy ground Some of the women's wards were beginning to get mosquito nets, I noticed

The chapel was a very lovely building Those in charge didn't seem to feel that the patients were active enough about their own affairs Many a Burmese expects his wife to do all the work whilst he sits and smokes his cheroot Yet it's happy, healthy work that helps the cure I don't know which to admire most—the tender care of the Scotch nurse or the skill and service of the Indian doctor A recent medical visitor had described the home as "the best I have seen in my experience "

In one of the wards I found a Chinese from Yunnan What a joy for him to meet someone speaking to him in his own tongue There were 300 patients altogether Seventy-five per cent of the applicants have to be turned away The missionary nurse had been there for twenty years The Indian doctor, an acknowledged expert, had lived and worked there for twenty-seven years

Leprosy, they told me, was terribly rife in Burma and, in spite

of all that had been done by the Church, by Missions to Lepers, and by Government, was increasing rather than decreasing. They thought that the Buddhist, pessimistic, attitude to the world and life made Burma more resigned to evils of this nature than was customary elsewhere. When revolution comes, I thought—or, at least, independence—will that fatalism and apathy be overcome? Since then Japanese, Chinese, and Western warriors have poured across the land. Will the war turn out to have been a blessing in disguise?

In the day or two I stayed there, I looked over up-to-date and busy high schools for boys and girls as I had at Pakokku. These were largely subsidised by Government, as in India, Ceylon and the British dominions everywhere, the Churches supplying the teaching staff and taking responsibility for school administration. I was seeing a contrast to schools in China, where a Government system of education only arose with the Revolution and where the efforts of the Church schools were mainly dependent on private enterprise, even when registered with the Government, as they mostly are to-day. Our Empire administrators have been wise in their day and generation, securing modern schools of good, reliable standard, with the help of the Churches, at such a minimum cost and of such a quality as would not otherwise have been possible. One just wondered how things would go in an independent Burma, and one wonders still.

There was one school which, like the leper home, was a sheer, beautiful gift to Mandalay, and it was a joy to visit. It was the Bailey Memorial Home for the untainted children of lepers.

"After the previous day's visit to the lepers, in all stages of that dread disease, it was very cheering to see this little company of ten youngsters born of leprous parents. They had to be supervised; but some of them will remain entirely clean who, but for this loving care, would certainly be victims of this disease."

A little home of this nature has to be searched for. It will surely be the pioneer of a new age for the stricken.

The mission house, with its gorgeous flowers and flowering trees, so typical of Burma, was quite close to the old battlemented city of Thibaw and Mindon, his father, kings of Upper Burma. The red walls of the city and turreted watch-towers were surrounded by a moat. It all made a picturesque contribution to the landscape. The city lay four-square, with twelve gates. Its circumference was about five miles and the height of the wall some

twenty feet It was a great contrast to the Chinese royal city of Peiping Burmese taste, beauty and petiteness took the place of China's immensity and magnificence The palace within was built entirely of teak Its walls whispered of cruelty and treachery Here Thibaw executed some eighty princes to make his throne secure To my eyes, it was all a little tawdry and faded, but, with everything decorated in gold leaf and lacquer, it must have been impressive in its great days The whole palace, perhaps, because of its being made of wood, struck me somehow as being, lighter, brighter and less awe-inspiring than the Forbidden City of the Manchus in Peiping, with its marble terraces and courtyards, its winding streams and its greater size Yet this also was a forbidden city, as all men knew in the terrible days of Thibaw In the front of the palace was a wooden model, showing that beside the principal Queen's House there were houses for other, lesser queens, about one for every week of the year As the man, writing of Solomon and his three hundred wives, remarked "These Old Testament Christians were greatly privileged" I wonder It's from such things that the degradation of women and palace intrigues arise

The low hills that flank Mandalay are covered with pagodas gleaming white in the sunshine They're not temples, but each a reminder of and monument to Buddha These have been begged and erected by a Buddhist hermit He wasn't a monk A monk isn't allowed to handle money on this scale

As we went sight-seeing, we passed a wall enclosing 999 pagodas, some of them shaped like bells, but most of them after the pattern of the inverted lotus flower of the Shwe Dagon of Rangoon It would have been unbelievable that anyone should do such a thing had I not seen it Just as £1,000 is a more worthwhile gift than £1, so apparently 999 pagodas are more efficacious in piling up merit than a lesser number In all my walks abroad, I never saw nor heard of a pagoda being restored, though many were falling to pieces It was the building rather than the restoration of these emblems that was judged to accumulate merit

The multiplicity and ubiquity of these upturned lotus-flower pagodas seemed to me to witness far more to the power of the faith than to its originality and creativeness What, after all, has true Buddhism to do with any earthly attractiveness? It is Nirvana that matters and the ceasing from the desires and allurements of life Will new and revolutionary Burma be tolerant of these things,

I wondered? The only good photographs of Mandalay were to be found in the Japanese photographers' shops These photographs were to be found in other Eastern countries too They are clever and artistic, but were they "strategic" also?

A Burmese water-colour artist sold me some gorgeous paintings which make the beauty of his city live on in Britain's cloud-covered land Three miles behind Mandalay is the village where Adoniram Judson was imprisoned with Burmese criminals from May to October, 1825 In the porch of the tiny memorial church we saw models of the stocks for hands and feet in which the prisoners were kept by day and night through that dreadful summer Each day Mrs Judson, helmetless, walked through the torrid heat of a Burmese summer the three miles from Mandalay and back with food and comfort for her husband—surely one of the most heroic things that woman ever did Somehow he survived and was at last released to be the interpreter between the vanquished monarch and the advancing British troops The story is popularly and attractively told in the book, *Splendour of God* What remains of Judson to-day is that shabby memorial chapel, which not one visitor in a hundred ever sees, and the great Karen Church, with its membership of a quarter of the entire Karen tribe of a million people Were this other than a traveller's diary, a great deal might be said of the Karens and their Church I had to hasten from sight to sight and meeting to meeting After all, I was a traveller to China All else was incidental at that point. In Mandalay I saw a tri-shaw, a sort of rickshaw tricycle, where, instead of running between the shafts, the rickshaw-man pedalled his human freight along on a bicycle as they sat alongside him in a canoe-shaped carriage "A husband for a little time" is the name the dainty little Burmese women call this friend in need

Just to complete my Mandalay visit, I was motored for two or three hours down a tree-lined road to Kyaukse to see other friends and other schools Soon Kyaukse, like Pakokku, Mandalay and all the places I touched in Burma, were to figure in the distressful news If these pages seem disjointed, they are a true picture of my travels But to this must be added an impression of great charm and beauty—of Nature, and especially of the women-folk "The Mandalay *gharries*," I wrote, "with their gay blue sides and general decoration, reflect the gaiety and colour of the people The mixture of races everywhere is very striking This part of Asia is the melting-pot of the nations"

The religious interest is very striking, the main religions being Buddhism and Mohammedanism

The Buddhist monks are a sort of aristocracy Power is corrupting and there is a Burmese saying, "One good priest in a thousand" Yet I heard of saintly and learned *pongyis* too

"There is not only an anti-British movement here," I wrote, "but a monarchist movement as well Will that palace ever be needed again? These are dark and dangerous days What are they dreaming in the monasteries? To the natural desire of the Burmans for freedom and self-expression must now be added plotting Japanese, with their dream of Asiatic and world dominion, 'bringing also gifts' Probably to all this has to be added the smouldering anger of a beaten and subject race, feeling through its youth pulses of a new life"

Those reflections, written as I left the royal city, stand, I think, to-day Never did we need patience so much and, above all, understanding sympathy as we need them in Burma at this hour.

Six days after I'd left Rangoon, I was, on August 13th, back on the train again. We had the same happy send-off from the Mandalay Station with which I'd been received In this, and a good many other ways, Burma seemed much like China "*Huan Yin, Huan Sung*," we say in China "Joyfully meet, joyfully accompany," "Hail and farewell" At the Kyaukse Station they met us bringing with them gifts for troubled China, as they had, also without any appeal, at Pakokku and Mandalay

The train had no restaurant car, but stopped at Thazi long enough for a three-course dinner in the station restaurant Do you remember Thazi in the news? Our British Tommies will The station bell rang when the train was ready to start We paid our bills, left our coffee unfinished, and promptly got aboard This method of eating *en route* struck me as preferable to the dining-car method of Britain, but was obviously only possible for a limited number of diners

We reached Rangoon at six next morning, to be told the Air France plane would be there at 2 p m Later came a message that, owing to bad weather, the plane had gone straight from Akyab to Bangkok So the cup of tea that I was to have had with those generous-hearted Cornishmen, the M's, became eventually a week whilst waiting for the British Airways plane The airfields at Rangoon and in Burma generally just then left something to be

desired Through a bad landing, a German plane had caught fire and been destroyed, and I think it was a combination of weather and airfield that caused the land planes to avoid Rangoon at that time.

I spent a week seeing a good deal in Rangoon—the docks, the splendid municipal buildings, the Gymkhana Club where, in rain and mud, I watched a game of rugger, and the University Hall, which they claimed to be the finest buildings in the East I wondered if they'd seen the Yenching University in Peiping or Lingnam in Canton—both outstanding American gifts and very beautiful We also saw what the chauffeur described as "The Lying Buddha" This was a colossal figure, half sitting, half recumbent, on a hillside above a group of temple buildings. Other temples and sacred places I saw, and especially the schools of the American Methodists In one morning I visited one school for 300 Chinese girls and another for 500 Chinese boys, mostly from Fukien, I was told, an English school for 500 girls in a lovely new building, an Anglo-Burmese school for 900 boys and 500 girls Altogether this was quite a contribution to the education of Rangoon, and not untypical of what the Church was doing in the main centres of population in Burma

One night I attended a concert in the Gymkhana Club. My hostess, who used to compete in Welsh eisteddfods, was the soloist There, amongst others, I met a German-Burmese lady married to a Scotsman—a very nice couple Someone has impolitely called Burma "The rag-bag of the races" There are other rag-bags in the world, and one of them is Britain This has more to do with the greatness of our people than is often recognised

As I wandered about, I found that in Burma, as in China, white was the colour of mourning, and that just as in China 500 Buddhist saints, *lohan*, brought the Scriptures, so in Burma there's a story of Buddha himself visiting the land with 500 *yahans* There was a feeling about the country that reminded one of China Particularly there was a freedom of womanhood more characteristic of China than of any other Eastern country that I know Yet China's women seemed to me to be even freer, since their Revolution, than their Burmese sisters. A book I read in Rangoon, the *Lacquer Lady*, the story of Thibaw and his cruel, jealous, fateful Queen Supayalat, gave one the impression of femininity, if not of effeminacy. Lin Yu-Tang, in his account of

China, *My Country and My People*, gives this impression too I noticed those things for what they were worth There were certainly similarities, whatever be their explanation

At last, on August 20th, the week of waiting was at an end, and I found myself speeding over vast, wooded mountain country, arriving at Bangkok at 3 p m We were quite cold at 7,000 feet, as our engines drove through the cloud and rain of the monsoon In the Trocadero Hotel in Bangkok I became aware of the presence of China "Here the cycle of the trishaw is tandem and draws a rickshaw made for two I have noticed that nearly every trishaw cyclist is a Chinese My room-boy is also Chinese" Later the American Bible Society Agent, at whose house I met a Welsh Professor of English of the Bangkok University, told me that Bangkok was preponderantly Chinese, and that Chinese were to be found in fairly large numbers throughout the country Thailand was suffering from a sense of grievance She'd been denied her expectations from the 1914-18 war, she said, and would have no Englishman in her employ—Welshmen were a different matter She was strictly neutral in the Chino-Japanese War, and had at that time 3,000 Chinese under arrest for daring to send monetary help to their compatriots and the Chinese Government This was carrying neutrality a little far, and what happened in 1941 in Thailand came as no surprise to me The monks here were not, as in Burma, all-powerful There were plenty of these yellow-robed brethren They had many temples and idols Thailand seemed to be a halfway house, Buddhistically, between Burma and China

Politically there was talk of "Great Siam" and a recovery of lost possessions A good many of the moderns had been trained in Germany and Japan, for both of which countries there was a good deal of sympathy My informant in 1939 seems to have known his stuff How this journey prepared my mind for things to come! From Bangkok I went on in a small land-plane, a five-seater The aerodrome was exceptionally large and good, and the Thai clerks extremely efficient We had only one stop between Bangkok and Hanoi in Indo-China Udorn was an isolated field, somewhat waterlogged, with a few Siamese in charge, but everything was in apple-pie order So we reached Hanoi at 10 40 a m on August 21st, nineteen days after leaving Southampton, and with a fortnight to my credit in Burma A straight flight would have brought us to the gate of China in little over five days, and this was in the

early days of 1939, remember As men fly now, my journey will seem slow, but to me then it was quite marvellous

I pay my tribute to the singular efficiency, courtesy and helpfulness of the British Airways staff on the whole of this journey As for air-sickness, people will vary and weather will vary, but I believe all will have a much easier time if, when things get rocky, they strap themselves into their chairs, for then they move with the machine instead of on their own, and in one direction instead of several

Well, that part of the journey was over Just over these mountains was China proper. China was my goal.

BOOK THREE  
BY CHINA'S ROADS AND RIVERS

I

KUNMING IN WARTIME AND THE BURMA ROAD

THERE was no one to meet me at the aerodrome. My cables and letters, telling of the delay in Rangoon, had never arrived. X was there in the hotel at Hanoi. He'd grown so used to waiting indefinitely for me that he didn't seem amused when I asked if we couldn't catch the train and be off at once. Owing to the fall of Shanghai in 1937 and the Japanese blockade of the China coast, Indo-China was swarming then with refugees and other strangers. Haiphong, the port of Hanoi, had become the gateway into China. The Burma Road could hardly be considered as open yet. It had barely been finished before the rains of that summer of 1939, some of which I'd experienced. There was great congestion, and at the Customs House in Haiphong there were delays, only to be overcome with prestige or bribery. A Dane who had formerly lived in Manchuria told me that, for graft the Indo-China Customs officials had the Chinese beaten to a frazzle. China was as innocent as the Garden of Eden by comparison. X told me that the ordinary train up those mountains was booked up always for a few days ahead, and as for the Michelin (motor-coach), there wouldn't be a seat for ten days. Moreover, he seemed to wonder why a man who'd kept him waiting for a week should be in such a hurry to get on now. As if that wasn't the very reason. After a meal and a talk, we sallied forth to the China Travel Service. The courteous Chinese clerks confirmed all X's statements about the congestion on the railway. I'd asked quite innocently for a booking on the next train. Then I explained that it just wasn't possible to wait. "What about flying," he said. "I think I could get you a seat on a plane."

"Is it safe?" I asked. For I'd heard of an "accident" to a plane in which several important Chinese had been travelling. A Japanese fighter had suddenly pounced out of the clouds and the plane and all the inmates had been destroyed.

"Oh, yes," he said, "we've regular word of their whereabouts. The planes go every day. There's no real danger."

So I turned to X He didn't look as if he wanted to be an angel and travel by plane at his time of life, but finally consented, and the clerk proceeded to book us "How much luggage have you got?" Then deliverance came to the reluctant angel Fifty pounds of baggage had brought me safely and conveniently across the world I'd made some purchases and rearrangements in Rangoon I was going up immediately 7,500 feet to Kunming, and had months of travel before me, and didn't see how I could reduce from the 50 lb which British Airways allowed to the 30 lb. allowed by the Eurasia plane. X had been spending some of his enforced leisure buying stores of oatmeal, tinned jam, tinned milk and coffee for his wife, and was reluctant to leave them behind Even then, such foreign stores were becoming hard to obtain at a reasonable or, in fact, at any price So, finally, "You go by plane and I'll come on by the first train with the baggage" he said So back to the hotel we went for the night, to talk and to wander through this capital city of Indo-China. In this, as in all French overseas cities I've been in, the most characteristically memorable sound is the screeching of brakes every few minutes, as some fast-moving car, without any speed limit, rams down the brakes to prevent calamity "Just like Paris," all the travellers said The Jehu of Hanoi was first cousin to the Jehu of Paris So we all carry our "culture" round the world, hardly conscious of what we're doing

I'd travelled by the narrow-gauge railway from Hanoi to Kunming five years before, four days and three nights, amidst marvellous mountain scenery Each day had lasted from dawn till dusk Each night I'd slept in a station hotel Because of frequent landslides there was no travelling at night I'd looked down and seen the winding track by which I'd travelled hundreds of feet below. I'd come over a steel bridge, which crossed an almost bottomless chasm, and wondered what would happen if that bridge were destroyed The Chinese answered that conundrum in 1942 They destroyed the bridge and removed all fear of an attack on Kunming and the Burma Road up those steep mountains and over that chasm. That railway will soon be open again It is said to be a more wonderful achievement than the line across the Rocky Mountains of Canada, and those who want to see the world's wonder and beauty will still wish to travel by rail from Hanoi to Kunming.

This time I was to fly, and the three days' journey was to be

accomplished in three hours The plane, by which we travelled next day, belonged to a Chinese-German Eurasia Company The pilot was a German The plane held five or six passengers and was quite full The wings were made of a substance which looked like corrugated iron

We'd a clear view all the way up, and the mountain scenery we came over was the most striking and beautiful of the entire trip so far There were enough clouds on the mountains above and around us, and sufficient overhead, to make us confident the Japanese wouldn't get us "The cloud of Thy protecting love" had a new meaning that day

One of my fellow passengers was a slight, slim, swarthy, intellectual figure in a dark suit and Congress cap, his hair going iron-grey It was Jawaharlal Nehru on his way to Chungking to see Chiang Kai-shek I've many times regretted that something prevented me from having a word with this great Indian leader. He was reading an English book on some revolutionary topic, I noticed He'd a great send-off from the aerodrome It looked as if the entire Indian community of Hanoi had come to see him off They put necklaces of flowers over his shoulders and around his neck, and there were speeches in some Indian tongue I left him finally in the aerodrome at Kunming talking eagerly with a few Chinese officials He didn't stay long in China, hastening back to India on the outbreak of war This fellowship between India and China, in troubles ahead as well as in present difficulties, is something to be reckoned with in the future history of Asia Japan isn't the only nation with thoughts of a new order and co-operative spheres Our pilot was a German, and, following the truly international tradition of flying, we had as passengers, besides this distinguished Indian leader, two Chinese, a Frenchman and two Englishmen

In Hanoi the rickshaw had taken still another form of development There the seats were in front, attached to a cycle behind, on which the rickshaw man pushed his passengers ahead The whole outfit reminded one of a hansom cab, with the driver perched behind Back in China, we were soon in real rickshaws once more, staggering and bumping over a rocky road, with a sweating coolie between the shafts I'd not seen the airfield Blinds had been drawn as we approached, but it was a good old country road along which we travelled in the gloaming, to the city we'd come through the clouds to reach.

In Kunming there was great apprehension of a raid, but, from 1937 to 1940, the city hadn't experienced many raids, for the very good reason that the combination of mountains and cloud made the going none too easy for a heavily loaded bomber. When I was there in 1939 there had been one raid only—some twenty-seven Japanese bombers had got through the clouds. The Chinese Air Force had been ordered to withdraw, which they did, except for one pilot, whose parents had been killed in Shanghai. He meant to have his revenge, whatever the cost. Going in, he succeeded in bringing one enemy plane to the ground together with his own. He was arrested and imprisoned, an American Air Force major told me, for disobedience; and then rewarded for bravery. Was the wisdom of Solomon better than this?

Five years before I'd found Kunming an old walled city beginning to be made new. Streets were being widened, and concrete was replacing the granite slabs that had served for a covering to the central drain of the old-fashioned narrow street. French influences had been very strong. That Indo-China railway had been constructed originally in competition with a similar project in Burma. The French had won with accompanying economic and cultural results. My impression on this new visit was mainly of dust, lorries, oil-barrels, soldiers and refugees. The population of the city was said to have trebled. Prices were mounting all the time. The refugees were largely the wealthier sort from Shanghai, Canton and the coast. They were very uncomfortable and always longing for the flesh-pots of their home towns. They paid anything that was demanded for local commodities, and the prices were rising by leaps and bounds. You could hardly expect them to be popular in the neighbourhood.

"When the war is over, China will go home. Very few will remain in the place of their temporary exile. Meanwhile, things are happening to them and to their hosts that may have permanent results for good or ill or both." This was often said to me, and already it has proved to be true.

Because of the fear of raids, Kunming was quiet by day, but woke up, opened its shops and led a fuller life after dusk, when no one dreaded any trouble from the air. No fewer than five Government universities, refugeeing from the north, had come together in temporary quarters. In later years, British professors, under the British Council, have taught and studied in those exiled universities.

Kunming, and its province, Yunnan, had never, since the beginning of time, experienced such erudition before In the environs were a few little refugee factories, but there was nothing much to write home about A Chinese friend told me recently that, in the earliest of the last few years, more money had been spent on publicity about the Chinese industrial co-operatives than on the co-operatives themselves I've no means of checking up such a sweeping statement, but in seven or eight months of travel I saw very little to justify the great prominence given to this matter Latterly the evidence has increased of considerable activity of this nature, especially in the west and the north-west There was not much that I could see then For the rest, there were hundreds of motor lorries in Kunming, but a serious shortage of petrol Lorries were coming in both from Indo-China and Burma to be used on the new roads When petrol finally failed, the lorries were driven with charcoal, alcohol, and anything that would generate gas and get them going

In the city I met an old friend, one of China's modern philosophers and poets, spending his "sabbatical year" caring for exiled students A few years later he grew unhappy in the *émigré* life of Kunming, returned to Peiping, and was imprisoned for a while by the Japanese in that city After that he settled down to wait the liberation of his country, knowing that the day of freedom would surely come

At that time he told me, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, "The Japanese can't win There's a God in heaven and the world is built on righteousness and love The ultimate victory is ours" That faith I was to meet in all sorts of places, from all sorts of people It was more prominent in free China, but it was just as evident in invaded China Times and season they were not sure about, but "atrocities and cruelty will not in the end prevail" It's this faith that brings China and Britain very near together Calamity does not alter it, they know they can't be wrong

Meanwhile, the aeroplanes of the Chinese Air Force were more continuously above us than they've been in any British town of my acquaintance of the last six years Yet the apprehension of a Japanese raid was great I met an old pupil of Wuchang days who'd become one of the most distinguished educationists in Yunnan I met a Chinese doctor who, after losing two members of his family, had arrived with the others after a trek of over 1,000 miles from Wuchang He had a job and was thankful and

content How we rejoiced in the unexpected meeting What a wonderful reserve of patience was there I met a husky American friend, a Professor of Philosophy in the Central China College, Wuchang. He'd come in from Hsichow near Tali, one day from the Burma border, where at long last his refugee college had found a home, 1,500 miles from Wuchang He'd driven a two-ton lorry in from Hsichow to Kunming to pick up books, apparatus, students and teachers, and it was with him I took the next part of my journey

We started at dawn one morning, loaded up with packing cases of books and apparatus on which grateful students spread themselves and their bedding, thankful for a lift on their own college truck On a couple of hard seats in front sat the Professor-chauffeur, myself and four missionary teachers We were soon past the sleepy Custom House official, and skirting Kunming's Great Western Lake, with its seventy miles of water, with its wooded slopes and famous and beautiful temples I'd found an Indian pilgrim in one of those temples in 1934, one more link between the two civilisations Hardly past the lake we came upon a landslide Red sand-stone blocked the road Coolies were at work upon it. We joined in and soon nosed our way through the debris and then on again. We passed beside farmhouses, villages, little streets, among the rice and the hedge-less fields typical of China everywhere We zigzagged up and down the valleys, we coasted around the contours of the hills We climbed huge mountain masses, one of them twenty-five miles across Through the fields, through the pine-trees, up to the grassy slopes above we climbed Ever above and beyond were far-stretching, heaven-reaching mountains, bluer and dimmer in the hazy distance. The "Switzerland of the Far East" they call it If earth holds anything sublimer than these mountain vistas through which we travelled for two long days, then it is paradise indeed In their season the lower slopes of Yunnan's mountains are carpeted with azaleas and rhododendrons As we sped along we passed wayside shrines mantled in purple clematis, saw the dog-rose and the violet and knew that the flowers of British greenhouses and gardens were growing wild here. The road was not all joy There were road-blocks from fallen mountain land There were pot-holes and ruts that set the lorry prancing and bouncing like a runaway horse There were bandits and bandit-scares in this lonely countryside. By the wayside, we saw the breakdown gangs—men and women and children

filling in the holes and soft places left by the rains These were often little groups of China's tribes-people Then we saw the more skilled and engineer-led repair gangs clearing the road of the rubbish of fallen rocks Moving in and out of our track, sometimes parallel to us, sometimes crossing our road, sometimes disappearing before returning again, was the track of the new Burma railway—bed laid down, culverts made, tunnelling and bridging proceeding More thrilling was what was called the Marco Polo Road Whether Polo actually travelled this way to Bhamo and Burma I don't know, but others had for many centuries It ran up hill and down dale like a white ribbon straighter than our road, where gradients had had to be suited to motor engines Actually, the road was some ten or twelve feet wide, and was paved with smallish lumps of stone on the mud bed to make it an all-weather road for mules and men Over its course caravans of men and mules were still moving at the centuries old pace The mules were not allowed on the new Burma Road, for their sharp and innumerable hooves would soon have torn it to pieces The closing of the Burma Road wouldn't of itself affect the traffic on the Marco Polo road except to lead to its increase It's difficult to stop the flow of China's millions

We spent our first night at Ts'uhsiung, a little walled city where an airfield was located and a rather remarkable missionary was living Her story follows later The second night we were at Hsiakwan—"Lower Pass" or "Lower Barrier"—from which the road ran steeply down alongside a roaring stream to the valleys of the Mekong and the Salween We motored down a few miles, just to "look see," but we weren't going that last day's run to Burma So we returned, left the Burma Road, and rocked over very much of a sub-road to the ancient city of Tali, beside the Great Ear Lake The story of Tali and its neighbouring peoples is told in Fitzgerald's *The Tower of Five Glories* (Cresset Press)

He describes the speech, the habits, the worship and the traditions of the Minchia, through whose villages and roads we walked for fifteen miles from Tali to Hsichow They're an ancient tribe, but to me were hardly distinguishable from the Chinese I found it hard to understand them or they me, and concluded their speech was just a country brogue, and I an uncouth foreigner. Fitzgerald's descriptions are so akin to what I knew of the people of Central China, Hunan and Hupeh, that I've wondered if there's anything much distinctive left in the life and habits of the

Minchia, and whether they must not be regarded as largely assimilated to the life of the Chinese who rule them.

The walk was through amazingly beautiful country—lake, stream, snowcapped mountains and sunny slopes, pagodas, temples, memorial arches, broken-down mud-brick huts and the ploughman homeward plodding his weary way. And so to Hsi-chow and the refugee college from Wuchang.

On the second day out we'd halted for a time at Yennani where American trainers of a Chinese Air Force on an airfield adjacent to an aeroplane assembly factory had entertained us royally with ham and eggs in such quantities as I've never seen before or since. There I'd sent a wireless message back to Ts'u-hsiung, where I'd left my wallet, containing my precious passport, under my pillow in the prophet's chamber. Fancy being passport-less in China at that date I'd seen some in England, and was to see others in Shanghai, in that sad and hopeless state and I'd no wish to share the experience of a man without a passport and without a country.

A reassuring reply was received which comforted me upon my way. For the rest, Nature was good enough, as you have seen I expect those airfields at Kunming, Ts'uhsiung and Yennani subsequently became key-points in the struggle of the American General Chennault with the Japanese.

## AN EXILED COLLEGE AND A WOMAN'S STORY

**H**SICHOW must be one of the most beautiful places on earth. On the night of our arrival I'd sat and watched the silver of the full harvest moon shining on the lake. The heavens were deep, almost purple, blue. The stars shone out as though they were embossed gold. Opposite was the deep shadow of a mountain rising some 2,000 to 3,000 feet above the lake. "Have you anywhere seen anything more beautiful than that?" asked the Professor. Next day I found rippling brooks from the hillsides flowing through this country town, guided doubtless by Chinese skill. The hillside was colourful with flowers and flecked with wisps of cloud. If this wasn't paradise, where was I likely to find it? My chauffeur-host was the proud possessor of a little family temple, idols and all. This was a strange experience for a missionary. It had happened this way. The richest and most influential man in the town was a merchant called Yen. He'd made a fortune down the years, through his transport company, that functioned from China to Burma over the old Marco Polo Road. Like many a successful merchant in China, he'd dignified and glorified his "*lao chia*"—"old home"—there at Hsichow. His benefactions had been very great. In this pretty little lakeside town I found a modern library building, with guest-rooms and accommodation for an up-to-date school. All this was the outcome of his munificence. Such a set of buildings would have been natural in Shanghai, Tientsin or Hankow. Here it was, in the very heart of China's mountains, proof of the openness and alertness of the merchant's mind. When he heard of a college bombed and driven from its home, and seeking a place of refuge, he offered all the facilities of the locality to its students and teachers. Here they were using temples and public and private buildings according to their need. Temples in China are often used as school-houses and are available for travellers as hostellries and holiday haunts. They're recognised as a sort of public building. There was nothing unusual in their housing strangers. What was unusual was that a Christian college should settle in for years of continuous occupation with the idols, still worshipped from time to time. So you'd city gods, gilded Buddhas, goddess of mercy and all that, fellow

tenants with physics and chemistry and modern philosophy, cheek by jowl under the same roof Adversity makes strange bedfellows. My host had been permitted to build wooden partitions each side of the idol shrine. We men slept in one room and the women in the other The idol, before whose shrine we spread our table, kept guard between us. At the other end of the little enclosure the cook had rigged up a kitchen and found room for his trestle-bed. Occasionally folk came in and burned incense to their idols, just as if we weren't there We went on with our daily life undisturbed by idols and their worshippers We were their guests; what else was there to do? An idol is nothing and will vanish away. Meanwhile the college and its staff were grateful for the roofs above their heads In the whole of China was there any other college so strangely housed? The city's main temple was the centre of the college life The idols were screened and hidden behind a curtain of blue cloth, and on this side modern science and the Christian faith pursued their enlightening way In the temple grounds had been erected, with mutual goodwill, two large two-story wooden blocks to house physics, chemistry and other science lecture-rooms and laboratories There was housed the administration block and there I met a company of old students from my old school in Wuchang, very troubled because after years of persistent continuance, in makeshift places, their old school had perforce been closed. "Get it open," they begged. "Schools that aren't open now will find it impossible to function in the days of victory and peace." Their loyalty to their old school, 2,000 miles away, was very moving Not long after, that school was reopened in the Yangtse Gorges at Wanhsien, and in 1944 fifteen students having won scholarships, moved right across the country from Wanhsien to Hsichow, a tremendous journey, to continue the link between school and college.

My time was very limited I'd booked a place on the Burma bus at Hsia Kwan for the following day, at dawn So I moved about the town inspecting student hostels and teachers' housing, drinking in the fresh mountain air, revelling in sky and hill and lake; sensing the difficulties of a refugee college and realising how magnificent can be the generosity of wealthy Chinese when they are moved China often seems a cheese-paring country, and to great thrift it is compelled by the poverty and the uncertainty of life. Yet I wonder if Chinese generosity can be equalled by that of any other nation on earth Here, at least, was a non-Christian but

patriotic merchant and his friends lavishing their kindness on a patriotic but Christian college in distress and carrying out the will of the Government He was not content to give gifts in Hsichow itself, but, in his hostelry at Hsiakuan, he'd made arrangements in his lavish way for the Chinese President of the College always to have a private room at his disposal There I'd met him on the previous night on his way to attend the People's Political Council at Chungking, and there, sitting on his bed, we'd talked far into the night Strange contrast this to Oxford, where, in 1937, I'd seen him last Missionaries in Hsichow were sharing life with their Chinese colleagues as they never had before All over China such things were happening Good does come out of evil many a time

One of my unexpected experiences at Hsichow and Tali was to find the Chinese producing a sort of rancid butter and abundance of milk for their own use In central and other parts of China, the taste for milk and butter had to be acquired by patients in hospital Cheese seemed to be a substance that Chinese could never bring themselves to eat They told me that this was Moslem country, and therefore cattle and the products of cattle took the place of the pig elsewhere The foreigners said that they treated the butter with potato in some way, to make it more palatable, but it was more of a wonder than a thing of joy to me

The horses and chairs we'd hoped for after lunch failed to arrive, so once more I was compelled to foot it the fifteen miles to Tali My American friend came along on a bicycle, which he hadn't ridden for ten years When, at length, I arrived footsore, famished and parched with thirst at Tali, and found him stretched out on the sofa, completely done in by that heavy ride, I realised that, even when you were tired, there were worse methods of travel than those that Nature had provided

At Tali I found a little school for foreign, mostly English, children, some twenty of them in one room, at all ages from seven to their early teens They had the latest books and latest methods, both of Britain and America The teacher was a lady from a London suburb, who'd got interested in two missionary children Hearing of the need, she'd accompanied them back to China Many of the children in that school had come ten days over the mountains They could only return home once a year for a good holiday For the rest, a missionary's wife was matron and attended to all their physical needs and the teacher, not a missionary or with any intention of being one, was doing all she knew

to keep them abreast of modern education. It had to be individual teaching, but, from what I saw, I doubt if those children would suffer overmuch. There might well be compensating advantages. It's curious what unknown goodness may be found in out-of-the-way corners of the earth.

I spent the night in the President's private room in the Hsia Kwan hostelry and then took my place in a numbered seat on the Burma bus bound for Kunming. It had seventeen seats and seventeen passengers only, with a rationed amount of luggage in the compartment behind. So different this from the country buses in Hupeh or, for that matter, from the London Transport Company and its trains and buses at the rush hours of the day. To overload a Burma bus would be to ask for trouble. We'd troubles without that. The engine proved awkward and the bus stopped after we'd gone an hour. I longed for my American professor, but he was back in Hsichow. I'd no fancy for being marooned on a mountain road, always liable to the incursions of bandits. The chauffeur was a study in China, cursing and sweating by turns, calling that engine all the names he could think of, including useless references to its mother and rotten ancestry. Months later, between Kalewa and Kalemyo in Burma, I met a similar experience. The Burmese chauffeur smiled and walked around, tied up this with a bit of string and gave a turn to that, smiling and good-humoured all the time, till, for very shame, the old thing started again and took us on our way. In Burma they smile in China we curse. It was a lorry-driver who helped us that day. He knew. After a little manipulation, he brushed the dust off his clothes, gathered as he lay beneath the engine. "Try that," he said, and for the rest of the day she ran without let or hindrance.

After all, I suppose, it's better to know than to curse or even to smile. Owing to the delay, we were late into Ts'u Hsiung, but I wasn't so bruised and battered as I had been on the college lorry. First, I gratefully recovered my passport, and then I sat and listened to Miss Morgan's story. It was Sunday. When she came in she said, "Germany has invaded Poland and England has declared war." She'd a class for Chinese pilots every Sunday afternoon and they'd told her that the message had come by wireless. So, in that out-of-the-way spot, I learned the news before most people in China. It was September 3rd, 1939. She was a cultured American woman. She'd a hacking cough, and one eye had been removed. She taught a class of air-pilots cadets, but had

never been on a bus I took her outside the city to the bus station and she was "tickled to death," she said, to sit in my seat and toot the horn The Burma Road had only been finished a year and she'd lived there for many years, when the only means of coming and going was on the Marco Polo Road or on a cross-country path

"I used to live in Tali," she said, "where you've been, right up to the 1911 Revolution You remember that, don't you?" Most certainly I did remember October 10th, 1911, with the fires burning and the rifles cracking in Wuchang, and all the fears, the upheavals and the changes "Well, our Headquarters were in Shanghai, and they were anxious for us in remote places We were ordered out and, most reluctantly, we came How were they, 1,500 miles away, to know whether it was safe for us to stay or to travel? Still, I was under their authority, and I came out, but was so upset that I determined to begin a mission of my own My mother in America and her Church promised to do what they could, and I set off alone from Shanghai to Hong Kong, Haiphong, Hanoi, and up the railway to Kunming There I bought a horse and placed myself and my luggage on his back, and set off along the road, not knowing where I should settle You came this journey in less than a day by lorry, it took me four days then Arrived at Ts'u Hsiung, my horse died So I took that for divine leading and settled here alone For seventeen years I met no American or British person and spoke no word of English I lived Chinese, ate Chinese and dressed Chinese Then this eye gave me trouble and I knew that something had to be done I wasn't willing to go to a British or American doctor after all that Chinese living I sought out Dr Mary Stone, a famous modern Chinese doctor in Shanghai She removed the eye and then one day, when I was convalescing, asked me to speak to a gathering there about my Yunnan life Somewhat diffidently, I did so Next day there came to me a most highly-trained Chinese lady, who said she must return with me After a good deal of argument with her brothers and her family, they finally let her go to what appeared to be a wild-goose chase One of her brothers is a famous Chinese writer You know him, don't you? The others are men of prominence to-day We've seven stations now—four staffed with missionaries and three with Chinese We've a flourishing and growing membership of 400, and that Chinese lady is the Chairman and leader of the seven stations and their work What we live

on is the giving of my mother's Church and what poor country members can contribute We share and share alike and could manage pretty well until these refugees came and the prices advanced by leaps and bounds. That's why I couldn't even provide you with a Chinese egg this evening. I'm so sorry not to have entertained you better. I'm not much good now I don't suppose this cough will ever be cured, but I can look after the others." Just then there was the shouting of coolies and a bamboo chair being carried into the yard Out of it stepped a Chinese lady, who could have earned almost any salary she'd demanded in Shanghai. For she'd been a skilled kindergarten teacher when that qualification was very rare "Good evening, Miss Hsia," I said "I've been hearing all about you I'm so glad to meet you Have you had a good journey?" Yes, she'd had a "right good time" and was full of her work and very happy

Here they were, two cultured, happy women, Chinese and American. Later on I moved about Shanghai with its richly-clad, charming women, carefully coiffured, educated, free—shopping, chattering, dancing, taken to the pictures, pictures themselves, modern, healthy, free Chinese womanhood. I went from Shanghai to Chingwantao on a coaster and heard a dejected Englishwoman on her way to Peiping with her husband bemoaning her fate "I don't know how I shall exist in Peiping I've always been used to going to the pictures once a day and twice on Sundays, and there's nothing like that in Peiping" Poor girl How I pitied her, but it was joy to be under Miss Morgan's roof. No pity there, only a sort of envy Her only trouble was that she couldn't serve me with a tiny Chinese egg She'd no other worry. Travellers told me they dare not offer her money for her goodness, but I happened to know that a bag of flour or a crate of potatoes could be left without causing offence I'm not saying that missionaries ought to go off as lone birds and live that sort of life. I just put her in my story as, in some ways, the most remarkable woman that I met in seven months—and a woman entirely happy A lonely and lovely missionary.

So I passed in and out of their life again, remembering their devotion and their well-ordered kindergarten school Nor can I forget the prophet's chamber, where I lost and found my passport. Not far from Ts'uhsiung, on the previous day, there'd been a cattle raid by a roving band of armed men So our bus and other vehicles kept in a sort of convoy. I wasn't over happy that they'd

arranged for us to head the convoy, not wishing for any glory of that sort However, we saw no one and nothing happened We were safely into Kunming again in the afternoon The city was all agog with the news of the war We heard that Italy and Japan were to be neutral So, as far as I was concerned, my journey through China might still be possible

Then a cable arrived from London telling me the news and urging me to pursue my journey wherever that was possible and by no means to turn back

The war overshadowed me and the heavens seemed very dark I sent off a wire to various friends in China to intimate my movements, and thought of the family at home I reminded myself that many of the China missionaries were in my state of separation from their families I learned with interest of the appointment of Winston Churchill to the Admiralty and Anthony Eden to the Foreign Office Evidently we were getting the proper men in power There was only an odd wireless or two in Kunming and no daily Press except the local Chinese paper No one was quite sure of that It's curious how human beings adjust themselves to changing circumstances Though, from that day on, and for all the journey, the war was an undertone of all my life, the necessity for greater energy was the only real change that came to my plans I was to push on with all my strength I'd seen enough on the Burma Road to give me food for thought for many days, but to have turned back then would have been frustration indeed

### III

#### NEW ROADS AND THEIR MAKERS

BETWEEN 1934 when I'd last been there and 1939 very great changes had come over Kunming. It wasn't only the air-field and planes overhead all day long. It wasn't merely the hundreds of trucks that crowded the roads and streets or were gathered in great car parks. It wasn't just the refugees, the dust and the soldiers. Kunming, from being an old world town on the borders of China, tinged, since the opening of the Indo-China railway, with French influences, had become in two years of war one of the key places of China. The city was not the back gate, but the main gate into China at that time, whether from the Pacific Ocean or from Burma and the Indian Ocean. All other routes into China had been closed except the long desert north-west route to Turkestan and Russia and the somewhat precarious air route of those days. Tientsin, Shanghai, Hankow, Canton were all in enemy hands, and whilst there were still ways for the daring through Ningpo, Wenchow, Swatow and a few other points on the coast, these places were certainly not open doors and, in spite of Hong Kong, Canton, with its Pearl River, was blockaded.

There'd been, as there is to-day, much talk of the Burma Road. It was freely said at that time that the British Consul in Kunming had been a prime mover in this great achievement of China at war. To me the Burma Road seemed almost incidental. For one thing, it was only beginning to function. I had actually, on my trip to Hsichow, met the first car up the road in 1939 after the summer rains. It contained a young American journalist and three Chinese companions. He'd done the journey from Lashio to a little beyond Ts'uhsiuang in six days or so—quite good going under the existing conditions. Kunming, however, wasn't just a station on the Burma Road or a connecting link with the sea at Haiphong. There were new motor roads out of Kunming, north, north-east, east and south, as well as west, and all this had happened in a year or two.

My next objective was the city of Weining, in Kueichow, a new rail and road centre, where the Church, because of the new developments, was faced with new problems and new opportunities. I could have gone part of the way by public bus. The buses were

slow and overcrowded and not to be compared with the Burma bus Our time was limited and there were several of us travelling together, so we were glad when the Manager of the new Northern Railway consented to let us travel in one of his constructional lorries On Friday, September 8th, early, we were at the Railway Transport Office of the Kunming-Suifu Railway waiting for the lorry Suifu is a town at the junction of the Min River with the Yangtse, between Chungking and Chengtu I'd reached this town in 1934 after a ten days' trek from Chaotung, walking and riding in a mountain chair through the most gorgeous scenery It was strange to think that the whistle of a railway engine was soon to be heard amongst those mountains and gorges The very thought of it was enough to arouse all the dragons of cloud and stream and mountain After an hour, the lorry arrived at 8 30 We got most comfortable seats in the cabin—more roomy and more comfortable to me than either college truck or Burma bus We were soon bowling along a practically level way from Kunming to the country city of Hsuenwei, where we spent the night We took some ten hours to cover the 165 miles, which included one or two long stoppages for meals and re-fuelling So that we got along at the not unreasonable pace of twenty miles an hour The largest place *en route* was Ch'uhching, where the main road turned off to Kueiyang, centre of the road system for south and south-west China, and three days' journey from Kunming Ch'uhching had become a construction centre for both road and rail, and was quite up-to-date On a later journey I found a Shanghai restaurant there, foreign food and a foreign menu, with a Shanghai chef in charge He was meeting the needs of East Coast Chinese engineers, but what a jolt for backwoods China to have such strangely progressive citizens suddenly projected into its midst It was a little bit like finding the Ritz Hotel in the west of Ireland Between Ch'uhching and Kunming the vehicles on the road, chiefly motor lorries, were very numerous The traffic, both ways, was almost continuous and the road in excellent condition

Alongside us, the whole 165 miles, was the rail-bed and embankment of the new railway which was evidently being pushed on with great energy Some of the culverts were completed But not the bridges, as far as I could see This stretch of the railway was easy going The difficulties would begin after Hsuenwei But even there the mountain country is not so difficult as the country

the engineers of the railways to Burma had to face. In the following years my friends often travelled on that line. A railway from Suifu to Kunming means really that the Upper Yangtse and the Pacific Ocean are to be joined. I couldn't but dream of what that would mean for the opening up of Western China. Before 1937 you could travel by rail from Peiping to Canton in three days or so; and now we were within sight of a rail journey still longer from Chengtu to Haiphong. What terrific strides the old "sleeping giant" was taking. War may have hastened it, as war has since delayed it, but it's all part of China's revolutionary dream. Such things have their effects on the whole human world.

It was pitch black, with rain falling, when we reached Hsuen-wei. The preacher and his friends met us with storm lanterns, but as we stumbled through the darkness, we'd no idea of the sort of city we were entering through its tunnel of a gate. "We've put you in the inn, because there's no room in the chapel," said he.

"Strange," we thought. "Why is that and what does it remind you of, anyway?"

After that long ride, we were glad to be anywhere. The inn was new and therefore clean. The Chinese food was appetising and we spent a tolerable night. The cesspool was near enough to be felt, and a pig or two added to the noises of the night. The cockerels began crowing as early as usual. Nothing new had been learned about sanitation. This is the bane of all country travel in China. Every prospect pleases, but some works of men are vile. What a task there is for China's Health Ministry at this and every time. Sanitation for 460 millions, mostly in villages, living in a country as big as Europe. What a plumber's paradise. No wonder the Chinese are patient before colossal tasks of this nature.

We went to see the chapel next day in which there'd been "no room." The city itself was poor; the streets uneven, the walls and gateway crying out for repairs. For all I knew, it might have been a typical country city in those border regions. Opium fumes were in the air, and people looked as if they hadn't changed materially for quite a number of centuries. It was, as a matter of fact, very down-at-heels and, as we were told, very, very conservative. Ambitious youth had gone to Kunming or even further afield. It was a strange contrast to Hsichow, with its wide-awake Transport Company. Into this old place, engineers had come with their families. It was a rail and road section headquarters. Into

the chapel we went. It seemed to be quite in accordance with its surroundings. Its inadequate one and a half rooms housed a tiny school and a few backless benches. Its walls were dusty and its pictures awry. That preacher was quite right. There was hardly room for three missionaries and their belongings to shake down there for the night, and the whole place was singularly unattractive.

"Well, how are you getting on?" said I, expecting to have lots of complaints.

"Very well indeed," was the reply.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, it's this way. This is an old-fashioned, conservative, Confucian place, where nothing ever changes. The general opinion was that this 'foreign teaching' was for coolies and down-at-heels, and no gentleman had anything to do with it. Then the roads and railways came and the engineers. Many of them are Christians. There are two sorts. Some just can't bear this little country church, and never come after the first time. Others evidently enjoy it all and practically are never absent. The neighbours who gave us the cold shoulder are saying that if cultured people from the eastern provinces fall in love with this 'foreign teaching' like this, then it isn't for coolies only at least, it's worth enquiring into. So now we're doing pretty well, and are by no means downhearted."

That's evidence of what is happening in this national migration, thought I. There must be all sorts of other consequences too.

That might be all right for Hsuenwei, but we wanted to move on. "The road to Weining is finished," we were told, "but it isn't open yet." The buses had not begun to run, but in the city there was a Frenchman training chauffeurs. He belonged to a company selling motor engines, and before he could sell them he had to train chauffeurs to use them. We'd gone to his lodging the previous night, and the one among us who knew a little French told us to be quiet and not to smile as he shrugged his shoulders and spoke his best Parisian. The upshot was we were told that the Frenchman was off to the war at dawn next day. With him were two German Jews, he said, to whom he was turning things over. One had been in China for some time and was married to a Chinese wife. He'd been in the Munich *Putsch* on the anti-Hitler side and had been wounded. He'd fled from Nanking when the Japanese seized it in 1937. The other was an Austrian who had

recently come from Breslau They were obviously of a mind to help us, and promised to go with us next day to the Bureau of Communications and see what could be done If we could get no help of this sort, then we were faced with three days' travel over unknown hill country, with a posse of unwelcome soldiers as a guard against bandits and things. Not a very cheerful prospect. It rained all night and our visit to the communications people proved unfruitful We then called for coolies to go by road, but could only get six At that juncture it seemed wise to go to the Magistrate and flourish a letter of commendation that I'd been given by the Ambassador before setting out from England The Magistrate, good man, had been busy the night before, and was abed, having given orders that he wasn't to be disturbed by anybody So we returned to our German friends, who said they would take a personal risk and see us on our way at dawn next day, Sunday. We therefore moved from our inn to their quarters How much they needed a woman, by the look of things

The German's wife and child were still in Szechuan The Frenchman, who had gone off before dawn, had evidently let things rip Such exiles don't have the beginnings of the comforts of missionaries They've money, perhaps, but few friends, and I think it was a real pleasure to these two Jewish refugees to find a bunch of people who were just ordinary and human with them They said that the war would be over in two months, that Germany, in its present condition, could not hold out for a long war I set it down then without comment It's strange reading now.

When we got our things to their lodgings, they had changed their minds, and decided to leave in the afternoon We were to spend the night at a place forty miles on, and get to Weining, which was 115 miles away, early on Sunday morning That was obviously better for us The journey turned out to be much more eventful than we'd thought To start with, we crept out of the city by a back way in the late afternoon Evidently that German chauffeur wasn't wanting to be challenged and turned back before he could get well on the road Then he didn't seem quite *au fait* with the works of his French engine Finally, that road, "finished, but not open," had its own peculiarities We were soon among the hills, with their skirting banks on one side and precipitous cliffs on the other, after the fashion of mountain roads. This one had a good solid centre, but was soft both on the hill and

valley side We soon had two skids, and had twice to turn out and push the bus on to the hard centre again I think his nerves must have had something to do with it In the gathering dusk, a hare, startled by our headlights, suddenly darted across the road Whether he thought he'd seen his grandmother's ghost, I know not He just lost control of the wheel We skidded all over the place, and, happily, landed in the ditch on the hill side of the road The German had had enough, and said we'd just as well stay there for the night To that we didn't agree We were in no-man's land, and who knew what dangers lurked around? So the Austrian took hold of things and through the dark night he took us up and down switchbacks, rounding curves, zigzagging up and down valleys At one place mountain villagers with torches and shouts tried to hold us up, but our imperturbable Austrian tooted and drove right through them, whatever their intentions We sped along bravely, along precipices and places, I, as usual, unconscious of any particular danger Behind me I could hear the occasional gasp of one of my companions, a motorist, who saw the risks that we were taking Then about nine o'clock we came to a dirty patch of the road made sodden by a mountain stream The front wheels got bogged right in and there we were for the night In spite of all we could do, we only got her further in Hill people of the Miao Tribe came to see what was amiss That was a comfort to us, for we knew that, for Samuel Pollard's sake, no Miao in this area would harm a missionary

We worked for a little time in vain Then one of us said, "We might as well undo our bedding and sleep till morning light" The German would have none of that "If we're a foot or two in now, where will we be in the morning?" We couldn't answer that one So all night long, with bits of stones and trees, we levered and pushed At least, they did When dawn came palely in we were at least no deeper into the mud than we'd been the previous night Then, in the dawning light, we saw cottages here and there on the hills and hailed the inmates to come to our aid They'd do so, they said, for a consideration The said "consideration" was a dollar apiece for thirty men, and they wanted paying before they started on the job They were real dollars then, remember When we told them that things were never so done in Israel, they told us that others had got stuck like that, and on being delivered had gone off and forgotten to pay They weren't going to be caught out that way again The end of it was that I sat on a fallen tree with

the thirty dollars in my hand and the headman sat by my side As soon as the lorry was clear of the mud and on the road again, I was to hand over the dollars and we would be free to go In half an hour the truck was clear, we were aboard, the money was paid and the Sabbath opened auspiciously An hour or so later our front wheel was through a wooden bridge Very fortunately, we had that morning given a road construction man a lift He was able to summon coolies with crowbars and used to the problems of the road With their labour added to ours, we were off in half an hour That was the last trouble we had to face, for our nervous driver, finding himself a few miles further on confronted with two broken culverts, declined to go any further and we didn't feel it wise to press him After all, the car wasn't his, and he was due to begin his instructions on Monday morning. So we paid for the petrol, gave his companion a handsome tip, and wished him a safe return He would take no gift for himself We thus found ourselves and our luggage by the side of a lake eight miles from Weining The servants took the luggage across the lake by boat we judged it would be quicker and better to walk

Those eight miles were heavy going We'd had no sleep the previous night, and practically no food all day Just outside Weining we managed to get a few pears, which there is Scriptural warrant for believing would be forgiven Finally, we got in by teatime, and what a welcome there was from T. and his wife and all our people

Weining is about 8,000 feet above sea-level The house was just within the wall of a country city The scenery above and around was very beautiful

The entire journey from Kunming of some 280 miles hadn't cost us much Up to Hsuenwei there was no charge It was a railway courtesy, and, anyhow, they couldn't make a charge when there was a licensed bus company running on the road From Hsuenwei on, we'd paid for the oil and a tip to the second driver There were five of us altogether—two Chinese servants and three foreigners with their luggage Who could say we'd been extravagant? Who could say our hosts hadn't been generous? This was no new experience in China

## THROUGH BANDIT-RIDDEN MOUNTAINS

WEINING is beautifully situated at the edge of a lake and is, 8,000 feet up, in the heart of the mountain country that separates the provinces of Kueichow and Yunnan I'm in my habits a little like the cattle, that my father used to point out in the countryside of England They so often seem to make their way to the crests of hills that they may see down both sides Is this a self-protecting stage in the evolution of beasts and men, I wonder? I climbed to a temple half a mile distant from which it was possible to see both city and lake in their mountain setting

Weining was a little place, judged by the more populous standards of the Yangtse Valley A walk down the main street and out through the East Gate and the business quarter gave one no particular sort of thrill From its very position on the main road between the two provinces, it must always have been important, and I'd heard of it for years as the official centre of the Nosu country. What did impress me was that here, as in Kunming, Ch'uhching and Hsuenwei, I was eyewitness to the throbbing of new life Through Weining ran new motor-roads to Kueiyang on the west, Chaotung on the north, Kunming on the south and Suifu and the Yangtse on the east It was an important construction centre for the new Kunming-Suifu Railway There was much evidence of the change in outlook and social life that these things brought But for that preacher's story on that rainy Saturday morning in Hsuenwei, I should hardly have been aware of any change there amidst the opium fumes and the decrepit city wall Here railway offices stood out quite plainly, and new schools T and his wife were full of it all, and it was partly the new day that was dawning that had taken me there to share their plans and thoughts and dreams Both Kueichow and Yunnan are sparsely populated and mountainous provinces, and a walled country city of 5,000 in a key position like Weining, with all the new construction of China's new life, was important, altogether out of proportion to its size and population In the war this place became an American Army communication centre, and an airfield was made in the vicinity, as my friends knew to their advantage

We were a fairly large cavalcade. The T.'s rode their horses, and we three others were carried in mountain chairs and walked a good part of the way. There were baggage coolies with our bedding, bundles and bags, and a number of Chinese friends with their accoutrements.

These, as I've said, were scared the whole way along and, finally, about 4 p.m., when every moment of daylight was precious, we came to a village where half a dozen men with old rifles and bandoliers offered their services to accompany us past a spot where, that morning, there'd been a highway robbery. This greatly cheered our friends, but meant a wait of an hour or so till our baggage coolies caught us up. It would have been a daring or a large band of robbers who would have ventured to attack so large a company, including five foreigners.

The consequence of this delay was that we found ourselves going up and down a deep gully in the gathering darkness and then, in the night that followed, trudging on interminably to a goal that was always a little further on, which we finally reached footsore and famished. This was a village called Ssu-shih-wu-hu—"The forty houses"—where there was a Nosu centre and school.

As we stumbled along in the dark, our chair coolies had got so tired and disappointed that they flung their chairs and themselves down on the ground in a passion and refused to budge another step. We lifted them up and comforted them a little. They were tired and hungry and done; but they finally came in smiling.

"All this was so unnecessary," said the impatient traveller. "But for the nerves of our colleagues, we should have been happily in by daylight." Who knows, after all? Perhaps I was tired when I wrote it. Two of my missionary companions, returning on this road two or three weeks later, got separated from their baggage coolies. The coolies were attacked and all the luggage stolen, though the owners saw nothing of it happening, and escaped scot free themselves. Bandits don't act as if they were in an exhibition. They are either there or not, and if they're there you know it. Perhaps our nervous friends had better reasons than we. Our baggage coolies never reached "Forty houses" that night. So we'd nothing but a mutton feast, which cheered our stomachs, but made a poor covering for our bodies. We got straw and laid it on the mud floor of the school, and with oil-cloths and mats made fairly comfortable beds, on which we lay side by side. There were

no mosquitoes, but the others said they discovered fleas innumerable I take their word for it, happily having no evidence of the existence of such creatures myself

Next morning we joined the eighty scholars and a few members for prayers, and then after partaking of mutton and mutton-broth once more and eating in a grand odour of mutton, we took to the roads again

We climbed up and up for nearly three hours till we reached the new motor-road Happily we found our missing coolies there, and were able to have some tea and biscuits to add to our saturation of mutton We didn't mean to be late again and, pushing on, reached the village of Lenhsuich'ien—"Cool Water Spring"—just about dusk Here the local Nosu official took us into his house He was very friendly and appreciative of the church schools which, he felt sure, would bring knowledge and peace to his disturbed hills He was out all night with rifle and bandolier, for it was his duty to guard against troubles The T's slept in the loft, but the rest of us elected to sleep under the stars in the courtyard This was my undoing My baggage coolie arrived very late, and in the darkness, whilst attending to some of the luggage, I slipped on some slime and found my foot going round and round till something seemed to snap and I was in the mud I got back into my camp bed, washed and bathed the troubled member and "sadly I thought of the morrow "

All the twenty miles we had to go next day I could hardly put my foot to the ground In spite of that, it was a glorious view as we gradually came down over the pass into the Chaotung country-side A messenger came out to meet us bringing food, and as we sat munching ripe tomatoes, meat roll and mustard, we forgot all our troubles for a little time By three o'clock we were in Chaotung in the midst of welcoming friends The doctor strapped me up, told me that no one bothered about a sprained ankle nowadays, and sent me crawling around on two legs and a stick until the unruly member should return to normal The total distance had been a little over seventy miles, but it had been hard going How we rejoiced in Christian beds that night

Chaotung is a walled city, larger than any other city I saw in Yunnan except Kunming It's the centre of a fertile plain surrounded by mountains It's some 300 miles north of Kunming, and rejoices in electric light How they dragged the plant over the swinging chain bridge at Chiangti passes my comprehension.

It was also a city where it was commonly said, "Out of ten men, eleven smoke opium" No foreigners had ever lived there except missionaries, and the mortality among them had been heavy

There were flourishing schools and a hospital recently rebuilt from gifts from England The doctor was also interested in leper work and was responsible for a small leper home there and another farther afield One event of these days may be an eye-opener to the reader I was present at an Ordination Service at which five young men were set apart for the work of the same ministry Henceforth they were to be of equal status in the eyes of all One was a young English missionary, two were Chinese and two were Miao All had been tested and trained all were received into the same rank and status This was a far cry from the early days of the pioneers That Chinese and missionary should be equal is one thing that the Miao should be acknowledged at the same level is something that will be better appreciated after the next chapter has been read.

This wasn't even a forward progressive area where new things may be expected to happen It was the back of beyond I'd never been anywhere in China before, where English, or equivalent, news was unprocurable It was part of the isolation of the province We had no news, but the not always very reliable Chinese Press A little later a wireless set found its way to that compound One day in the spring of 1942, it was switched on at random "And to our surprise and joy your voice was speaking to us, as naturally, as though you were sitting there in our midst," they wrote me Think of them, suddenly in touch with London as I spoke on "The Greatness of China" That unpremeditated communion with those friends, in isolation across the world, is the most memorable broadcasting experience I've known Will this journal entry cause surprise to you, made after a fortnight of meetings?

"In England I've felt how like the English some Chinese are Now, back in China again, I recognise the old English types and problems Here's a man who makes a mess of every place he goes to He's too young to be superannuated, and yet there's no definite charge against his moral character Here's a man who seems to think we're here to support him for life and seeks every possible personal privilege Here's one who froths eloquence and here the one who finds it a trial to speak Above all, there's the unadvertised man of solid worth who never speaks unless he's forced, but is the backbone of the whole business

"One young man it's been a joy to watch The way in which he handles difficult problems is a revelation of the human mind You half guess his object and watch his technique Without offence and without a slip, he leads you along till he has reached his goal, and the meeting is convinced What a contrast this to the 'brutal foreigner' who, in his ignorance and haste, rides roughshod over everyone and everything till the road, to a perfectly legitimate goal, is strewn with bruises and hurt feelings Truly the virtue, above all virtues, for a foreigner in China is humility and the grace of humility, as well as the light of truth "

So, in the backwoods of China, I saw the English Now, in the English I know I am always recognising Chinese These things are not fancy, they're the truth Chinese and British aren't really two Colour and tradition may be different, but a "man's a man for a' that," and very much like every other man if he's English or Chinese.

## HEROES AND TRAGEDY AT STONE GATEWAY OF THE FLOWERY MIAO

DURING the meetings at Chaotung, a Miao deputation came to ask that I would go and visit their centre at Shihmen K'an, "Stone Gateway" I told them I should be greatly disappointed if it weren't possible to do so Some of my friends were a little dubious, for tragedies were always happening in that wild and lonely country A Miao had been found dead on the road only a few nights before All difficulties were overcome and, as soon as the almost continuous rain gave signs of ceasing we set off on September 28th for our goal The entire journey was only twenty-five miles, but what a day it was!

It wasn't actually raining when we started, nor did the rain start till we had reached the Coal Hill, ten miles on our way There'd been ceaseless rain for thirty-six hours, and the way over the plain was a quagmire I dare not give my chair coolies any relief, for to have set my partially recovered foot down in that slippery mess would have been to ask for trouble We floundered along through the fields of maize, wading streams, slithering in inches of mud, with indifferent, opium-smoking coolies The opium habit in these parts is very widespread This is due to the remoteness from the capital, to old tradition, and to the sufferings of the people

There were three of us—S on a pony, C stalking along with a chair in reserve, and myself, tied by circumstances to my chair The Coal Hill was a slope where Chinese miners dug surface coal dust, which was carried to Chaotung for the making of the coal-balls, used in the ordinary Chinese cooking stove. The 400 or 500 yards of that steep hill was practically a slide of coal-dust The rain had made it as slippery as wet clay How those coolies carried me up I can't imagine. To add to our other troubles the rain started to pelt down Four militia-men joined us there, so small a guard being sufficient proof that there was no official anxiety for our safety. That ten miles of road had taken us four hours The fifteen miles before us were likely to be much more difficult if the rain kept on We knew we'd at least six hours ahead of us, and the last part in the dark. So we settled down to a good hot meal thoughtfully provided by C's wife It's the travelled wife in China

who knows how and what to provide Soon after noon we were off again We climbed till we'd reached the height of 8,000 feet at the "Bottomless Pit" and opposite a rolling valley where, a few years before, C and a colleague had had to ride, for their life and liberty, pursued by the bullets of a company of bandits Before the 1925 Revolution, bandits rarely molested us After that things had changed and no one was immune The so-called "Unequal Treaties" hadn't given much protection since then Most of us had sought and relied on the help of the Nationalist officials and had found them ready to do what they could in a time of need

At the foot of the next slope we came to a pine-wood with a farmhouse or two nearby Suddenly C said, "That's the very spot where I was held by bandits in 19—and where I was kept a prisoner for two hours I've never been here since"

He told us that when he was released he'd met six or seven Miao friends coming over the hills "Don't you know there's danger here?" he said

"That's why we came," they answered "We heard you'd been taken and we thought, if six or seven of us offered ourselves in exchange, they might perhaps let you go"

At C's pine-wood we were met by four men with guns, looking just like cinema bandits, and for a moment wondered if history was going to be repeated Even C wondered he told me

The front man was drunk or daft or both, and he had three companions with bandoliers and daggers complete They'd been waiting for us and stepped out of the trees in the most approved bandit fashion Our guards were out of sight, far behind However, in a moment, the gunmen were clicking the heels of their bare but sandalled feet and standing to attention They were, in fact, local militiamen from Stone Gateway come to escort us in "Are these some of your Christian soldiers?" laughed I

"Not exactly," says C

So now we'd eight guns instead of four, though I wished the leader's gun wouldn't, all the time, point over his shoulder at me

We pressed on in the rain and the greasy mud, crossing a stream or two, swollen and flooded, until we reached a deep wooded gorge, up whose steep side we zigzagged to the mountain in whose lap Stone Gateway lies We knew that if we could only get up the gorge in the daylight, after that we might flounder along, but with no great danger of falling over the steep cliff sides into the river below.

It was dark as we reached the top of the gorge, and we still had two or three miles to go. C had disappeared, S. on his pony, was a shadow in the mist against the blackening sky. The coolies, poor fellows, were getting more and more tired and finding it hard to keep their feet. Then lights began to gleam through the mist and the rain. C and some of his Miao friends began to show up with storm lanterns. "I hurried on to tell them you were here," he said. After that, every few yards, some smiling face would greet us. The coolies were heartened as they stumbled on over the mountain path, but the going was very slow. Then a Miao teacher took the place of a coolie under the front carrying-pole. Others seized the sides of the chair and they began to run me down the hill. This was too much for the second coolie, who began to be afraid and called out to his companions. So Miao preachers and teachers pushed him and the others aside. They laid hold of the chair, back and front, and at the sides, and literally romped me down the slippery hillsides, every foot of which they knew. The blackness of the night was lit up by the swinging storm lanterns that some of them carried. We splashed through streams and streamlets, ran over all sorts of slippery places, yelling, shouting, laughing, some with lanterns, others with a hand on the chair. If we'd fallen, I should have fallen soft there were so many of them to fall on. Finally, we reached the last stone steps leading down to and over the rushing stream. Then, with two leading and the rest pushing behind, we ran up the opposite steps and through the actual gateway of stone from which the locality takes its name. We passed a line of Miao schoolboys, wondering why their teachers and preachers were behaving so. Then round and down the hill we went into the garden, where they set down my chair, amidst laughter and gladness. Through the dining-room window, I saw that there was a roaring anthracite fire in the grate; for there is an outcrop of coal on the hillside of the compound, and coal cost them nothing there. Did anyone ever have such a spontaneous welcome home? The rain and mud and all the discomforts were forgotten as we sat and talked of "the end of a perfect day," and I blessed God for the Christian Miao and their kindly hearts and envied no man anywhere. To crown it all, a lovely Chinese meal warmed us inside and out. After that our beds were soon made up and we at rest. Why should I have all this pleasure? I thought. It was sheer joy to be alive.

The name of Samuel Pollard has been mentioned once and

again He lies in a grave above the valley and his superscription is on the stone in Chinese and English and Miao Another grave lay beside it, that of a murdered man That was the first place we visited in the rain of the following morning

Pollard and I had never met, though we were contemporaries, and he must once and again have passed through Hankow when I was living there His widow, still hale and hearty at eighty-two, and one of his sons, I met in England last year Their four sons have all had distinguished careers, as the father would have done had he remained in the Civil Service, where his life began He was third in all England in his Civil Service examination list Wherever I go I hear of him People used to crowd to hear his story That personal magnetism and artistry and the word-pictures that thrilled his English audiences were equally effective in Miao-land An act of humanity of an Australian called Adam, 200 miles away, started it all These downtrodden serfs of a harsh feudal system found all the kindness of Adam repeated and even transcended in Pollard Besides that, they found a genius and a tireless friend, who cared for the downtrodden He taught them to write and read their own language, inventing a script for the purpose He gathered them in schools as well as chapels He took all the drunkenness and filth out of their annual tribal gathering He so believed in them that they came to believe in themselves He was nearly beaten to death by their oppressors He died of one of their diseases, worn out in their service His name will never die among them Somehow this useless dust and mud, of which they were made, gathered new light and life under Pollard and his friends

I met a Red Russian in the Yangtse Gorges in the summer of 1934 "Why do you do it?" he said What the Chinese say is "If this can happen in Stone Gateway, why not amongst the other tribes?" The Border Mission to the Tribes is a direct result of Government initiative The Nosu, nearer to it all, say by their actions as well as by their words, "We'll build you schools if you will come to us" What else was said to me and what has followed will be set down in its place

Two years before this visit there'd been a tragic murder That was the reason of the second grave It all happened out of the blue The victim was one of Pollard's successors, Heber Goldsworthy The work was extending and he was busy building new houses In the area lived a tiler who had made the tiles for the

houses, schools, hospital, chapel and most of the property there. One of his sons looked after Goldsworthy's horse. He was a ne'er-do-well, and had to be dismissed. Partly from cupidity, and partly from what motive it is hard to say, he made contact with a band of robbers thirty miles away, telling them there were arms and money at Stone Gateway. It was possible that the heavy boxes of bolts and bars, and the fact that you can't build a house without money, were the source of this message. The bandits made a lightning dash across the country, and before anyone knew them near, were led straight to the place where Goldsworthy was sleeping. It was suggested that, in the mêlée, he recognised his groom and that, in fear of the consequent exposure, what was meant for a robbery became much more serious. Both bandit leader and tiler's son were subsequently arrested and executed by the Chinese officials. All the principal actors are dead, and we must leave it there. A man and his wife in the second house had time to climb through the manhole into the roof and escape observation. A hostel where Miao boys slept was also attacked. Probably the bandits were after arms in that case. Fire was kindled below and the boys were forced to leap from the loft. Some were badly hurt and burned, and one subsequently died of his wounds.

Ever since Pollard went to live there, more than thirty years ago, the area had been bandit-ridden, as border mountains between two provinces in China mostly are. The bit of road between Stone Gateway and Chaotung is not a main road and is particularly bad. Stone Gateway itself has never been attacked before.

It's quite clear that, from whatever motives, there was a Judas in the case. Nothing can ever be guaranteed. I'd flown across the world, had had experiences on these Yunnan roads, and been through bandit-country unscathed, only to twist my foot in a Chinese house in a bit of mud. You never can be sure. Such are the changes and chances of life. The station has been reoccupied now for five or six years. A Middle School has been set up, largely through Chinese generosity. An agricultural centre has been developed, and the difficulty now is not in China, but in the World War and the subsequent dearth of men and women available, for the time being, for service such as this. There's room for a Mary Slessor or two on these hills. Amongst other desirable accomplishments, she should have the capacity to teach music and singing, love for gardens and fields, some knowledge of seeds

and stock, a strong body, calm nerves, and a great trust in God The world is full of jobs to be done this is one particularly worth while There's room for quite a number of the right people, for the area is as big as Wales

Five years earlier, I'd been present at the twenty-fourth Spring Festival, founded by Pollard to take the place of earlier heathen sensualities I watched from a rough grand-stand, amidst a group of Chinese officials, all very friendly, the thousands of people, gaily dressed in their tribal tartans, attending the open-air sports of some 800 children, of whom one-tenth were girls There were all the usual items, with pony-racing and archery contest added There'd been a welcome meeting of 1,300 people and we'd had to split the meetings up into two or three buildings On this visit the welcome was more of a local affair The notice had been brief, my coming uncertain, and the weather very bad. One party of eighty who had set out to meet me had turned back when a woman was drowned crossing a mountain torrent Two of our companions of the previous day were drowned in another stream whilst we were in our meeting

Even so, the place was full and more than full, the girls and women and a few of the men being in festal dress We'd singing and speaking from teachers, preachers, a farmer, a schoolboy who, like an English schoolboy, faltered a little, and a schoolgirl who, like an English schoolgirl, made no sort of error How true they were to type There was something about the purity and tone of the Miao singing that I've not heard anywhere else in China A trained musician could do wonderful things with this tuneful people They took up chorus after chorus as they left the building and then stood smiling and stroking our shoulders and seemed unwilling to part with the first foreign friends who'd been there since the sad tragedy of March 6th, 1937 "*Ch'a-la*," they said, "*Ch'a-la*"—"Welcome" to all who come from Samuel Pollard's land In the five years between 1934 and 1939 I sensed a great move forward in their development That movement has gone on since I was as reluctant to leave as they to let us go, but this inexorable journey tore me away The leaders I met with that afternoon were some of them very able men We almost forgot they were Miao as we talked together in the common Chinese tongue

Next morning we were on the road quite early travelling through the mist until by and by we dropped down below it into the gorge and so began to climb again, past C's pine-wood and

the place where he and H were chased and the "bottomless pit" that's the last resting-place of a faithful ex-Muslim colporteur and his wife They were given the option of recanting from the Christian faith and, when they refused, were bound and thrown down this mountain fissure whose bottom is hard to gauge. We passed herdsmen with their herds of cattle peacefully grazing on the hillsides, and so to the Coal Hill, where our four militiamen and their bandoliers turned back and we slithered down to the lunch place at the foot of the hill There that thoughtful "woman" of C's had set out a meal to greet us. And so, over roads only better than two days before because it was not actually raining, we came at tea-time back home again to Chaotung, to hot baths, warm fires, steak-and-kidney pudding and the welcome of a gracious, kindly woman Is there any vocation on earth deeper, higher or more fruitful than that of a whole-hearted housewife? Am I old-fashioned, or am I just Chinese, in putting such store by the home?

Only a few hours were left before we must bid goodbye and be off on our journeys again I'd a walk through the city, where great improvements, including street-widening, had gone on since my last visit They had an A R P. practice too Fancy A R P in one of the remotest cities in China, we said It seemed almost ridiculous then, it seems less so now How closely our suffering has drawn us all together everywhere So, on the morrow, we parted Unforgettable memories I was taking with me, especially of Stone Gateway and the Miao Pollard's community of 5,000 had grown to 20,000 Those leaders had talked of their hopes of 40,000 and saw no end to those who wanted the benefits we could bring.

I've ever since seen S, a smallish man, about Pollard's height, riding through rain and mist, happy in spite of all He was realising the dream of a lifetime His boyhood's hero had been Pollard I watched him as he drank in everything Anticipation he had known This was realisation What had he cared for rain or storm or bandits, as he saw the Miao women with their hair done in a cone to denote motherhood, or the flat pancake of the hair of girlhood, as he saw their many-coloured plaids and listened to their singing All his life he'd dreamt of this. For a little while, at least, he was the happiest man on earth He's since gone with his wife to live among them, and on furlough he's still dreaming of Miaoland. These tribes, moving up to civilised ways through the instrumentality of the Church, need good, sympathetic, selfless and wise

leadership How I would have liked to have stayed Life does not return We cannot be young again We can only dream our dreams and pass them on Of all the transformations I've seen in China, none was so great and few so full of promise as what we saw in Stone Gateway What a place for an artist to live in, with its wild mountains and changing sky Incidentally, one of the missionaries there, with a flair for gardening, had given a new food to the oft-famished people He had introduced the potato to them, which now grows widely and readily on their hillsides

Air services after the war will be cheap, do see Stone Gateway before you die And yet, why should you? You might do more harm than good, unless you knew what you were there for

## ON "THE ROOF OF THE WORLD"

THE next stage of my journey beggars all description. all the grandeur, sublimity and beauty of Nature were there around us. We were on the old coolie route from Szechuan to Yunnanfu (Kunming). Passing through valleys at 6,000 feet level, the road climbed to 8,000 and 10,000 feet through the passes, from valley to valley. We gazed, through the riven clouds, above which we travelled to the sunlit fields on the plains below. We looked around us, from those heights, on a sea of mountains, wave upon rolling wave, some of them so high that our 10,000 feet was a sort of foot-hill. We watched the cloud effects and the changing colours chasing each other over the green hillsides. "The roof of the world" they called it.

In 1934 I'd come this way from Kunming to Chaotung, for there were no motor roads of any sort in the Yunnan Province then, though I remembered the engineers who were planning and measuring and the coolies hacking at the hillsides even so long ago. The whole distance was some 300 miles. We had spent ten days and nine nights, most of them in Chinese inns, upon the journey. We'd been able to have a long rest at Hueits'e, a walled city and a mission station, halfway on our journey. Hueits'e, like Kunming and Chaotung, was founded between 200 and 300 years ago by Chinese soldiers, sent at the close of the Ming Dynasty to occupy this mountain area for the Government and settle permanently there. At that time the Yunnan plains were in the possession of Nosu, Gopu, Miao, Lisu and fifty other tribes. The soldiers came and took the fertile plains and protected themselves behind their city walls. The fortunes of the earlier dwellers suffered but to-day there's much intermingling and some intermarriage. They live together in a common life. Yunnan's eleven million "mouths" are said to be one-third tribal, one-third Chinese and one-third Moslem. The Chinese are dominant. The tribes, especially the Miao, timidly dwell in the mountain tops and less-frequented areas. The Muslims have the reputation of being the cause of most of the prevalent banditry. I'd no means to check this, but so it was widely said.

Chinese always distinguish between Chinese and "*Hui Hui*"—

Muslims Does this trace back to a different racial origin? A century and more ago, there was a terrible conflict and an appalling destruction of Muslims in these parts They were hurled to death over city walls and precipices To-day these three racial groups seem to have worked out a method of living together in comparative peace This province used to be a place of exile to which Chinese officials were banished It was, till recently, far more a colony than a part of China proper The aeroplane, the new roads, the motor and the railway have altered all that Till the Indo-China Railway was opened, the way into Yunnan was from the Yangtse across weeks of single-track coolie road Thus route by which we travelled was the main salt-track from the Szechuan wells Continually we met salt coolies bowed beneath their burden of rock salt Yunnan is greatly deficient in the salts, and goitre is everywhere in evidence Those poor women with their bulging necks were always objects of pity to us By reason of its mountains and its remoteness, Yunnan, one of the largest of China's provinces, has only 11 million inhabitants The population is sparse for China Our group this time consisted of Dr L, his wife and child and Nurse H, all making for furlough in Australia, S of Stone Gateway and a new man, P, who were to pitch their tent in Hueits'e and all their belongings We were moving back to Kunming, and the best way to make you see this stretch of the road is to transcribe the daily Journal

*"Chaotung, October 2nd* I walked a good deal yesterday, six or seven miles My foot is still a bit lazy and nervous, but I shall be able to walk a good bit of the way if there's need to relieve the chair coolies So all looks well this morning—foot better, sun shining, blue sky, birds chirping and singing, doves cooing—but I do not want to say goodbye to these beloved friends

*"Taoyuen, October 2nd* This is a Muslim village on the edge of the Chaotung Plain We have come twenty miles over practically level ground Schoolboys, teachers, preachers, missionaries saw us to the end of the suburbs, and we got in our chairs, and were off at ten It has been dry all day and the drying roads were not too bad going To-morrow we spend climbing and descending the first mountains

*"Chiangti, October 3rd* This place means 'river bottom' The stream rushes down a gorge made by the meeting of great masses of mountain It is spanned by a rather remarkable suspension

bridge In this part of China, I have crossed such bridges made of bamboo or other rope This one is made of heavy, wrought-iron chains, two above and one below on each side The ends are set in concrete and firmly clamped to the river bank Light chains undergird these iron ropes at right angles, and on these lighter chains are fastened planks. Before you've fairly started across, the whole contraption sways and swings, yet it must be very strong Somehow or other, the electric-light machinery at Chaotung had been got across it There's a picture of this remarkable bridge in my *China, My China* (p. 241).

"When the Communist army who held Messrs Hayman and Bosshardt captive in 1934 were in this area the defenders dismantled the bridge The river was a serious barrier to men who weren't sure how far they were from their pursuers So they turned aside to Hueits'e and Kunming They killed a lot of people and did a lot of damage to Hueits'e and were within two miles of Kunming before releasing their captive and turning west

"We've come twenty-three miles over one mountain to-day, started at 7.15 and got in at 4.30. This was pretty good going considering the state of the roads, which are still very bad after the recent rains

"This is a main road and is full of mule and horse teams, salt coolies and other travellers, some with a gun or two We have two guards, fleet of foot, shod with straw sandals and armed with rifle and cartridge, who pass us on from one set to another at their various guard-houses. This main road seems to be fairly free from bandits, except at China New Year, when travellers go home well supplied with money and presents Our 'hotel' is comfortable as these things go, but one longs for a little approximate sanitation. It's all too primitive for words

"These mountain roads are divided into 'stages,' where there are inns for animals and men The thing is to avoid the horse-*inn* unless you're a muleteer For the horses are stabled below and their fumes and stink and champing rise to the loft above, where the muleteers sleep The man-inns are built of mud-brick and contain brick beds, on which you place protecting coverings of oiled-cloth, camp bed and mosquito net, lest you should have company overnight The window is a slit in the wall like the narrow window of an old English castle, but there's fresh air enough It's strange how little a human being needs if he's tired

enough There's always hot water for your aching feet and plenty of good Chinese food.

"The 'stages' are not often more than twenty-five miles a day. If you don't keep the stages, you miss the inns and the protection of the street. For you're passing through lonely country. Anyhow, twenty-five miles of mountains is hard enough for beast and man."

"Five years ago I climbed this Chiangti Mountain, going north, through the mist and pouring rain. It has been quite a change, facing the other way, to see from 8,000 feet four or five mountain ranges with an enormous peak in the distance."

"*Ich'aehsun, October 4th* We're in a little country chapel tonight, with a lovely garden behind, which I remembered after seeing it once five years ago. When one travels, day after day, without the most primitive arrangements for sanitation, and then finds a lovely private garden where one may 'relieve one's misery,' it's a joy not easily forgotten. This is one of the hardships from which missionaries—men and women—hereabouts suffer a good deal, and it's seldom, if ever, mentioned. Take Chiangti, this morning, for instance. Every turning was foul with human excreta. The entire coolie population seemed to have done its evacuations on the street. Sometime in the day, the precious material will be gathered up and taken to fertilise the fields. But, in the meantime, think of these things in terms of stench, discomfort, flies and disease. There's plenty of work for the 'New Life Movement' in such places. China's new leaders know something of their Herculean task."

"For the first five hours to-day we followed the winding course of a river to the top of a mountain pass. We could hear it singing and roaring below us, but seldom see it. Then, crossing the pass, we descended a steep hill into smiling fields. What a contrast to the almost famine of Stone Gateway and the obvious poverty of opium-ridden Chaotung. Muslim influences in this neighbourhood are strong and the Church's progress small. Ich'aehsun, the biggest place between Chaotung and Hueits'e, is said to have 400 houses, all or nearly all of mud brick. That's a total of 2,000 people, according to the Chinese reckoning of five to a family. We've taken nine hours to do the twenty-three miles, and consider it good going over such roads."

"*Hungshihyan, October 5th* 'Big Stone Precipice' this place is called. We've had another good day twenty-five miles in nine and a half hours. We had a short climb from Ich'aehsun and then

from nine to three we understood what it meant to be on 'the roof of the world.' The mountains were all around us and we part of them, and nothing beyond but sky. The general colour of all was the red earth, from which the green of the pine trees stood out. The last two days we've had little in the shape of guards, just one for an hour yesterday and two on the topmost road to-day. There's so much traffic of mules and coolies that it would be a big band that would attack on these roads, and a big band could hardly surprise us.

"We're resting to-night in our inn under a huge precipitous rock, with a waterfall, where monks, of course, live and a temple functions. It's a tiny enough place and muddy and foul as most country streets.

"Dr. L.'s horse is being shod in the yard. There's the usual murmur of evening voices. The coolies are quiet with their opium. A storm lantern hangs within a foot of this note-book. We've had our evening Chinese meal, and after a shave, a feet-washing and prayers, I'm off to bed. Only twenty miles to-morrow and a Christian bed again.

*"Hueits'e, October 6th* Last night it thundered, lightened and rained, and the roads have been heavy going. Our twenty miles took us nearly ten hours. Our decent inn turned out to be rather bug-ridden and left its marks upon some of the travellers. I was awakened by some heavy creature walking over my body. Whether it was the family toad or a cautious rat I don't know. It was pitch dark, and in the acrobatics that ensued, the creature disappeared and 'I saw its face no more.' This city is on the edge of a wealthy plain—quite obviously a shallow lake that has been drained. I don't remember ever to have seen such an expanse of rice. We came across five miles of it, and that was only the beginning of things. In the neighbourhood, copper, silver and some gold are found. Other metals too.

We stayed in Hueits'e for four whole days, resting and waiting for transport that never came. There was much to be done. I made a pilgrimage to the hillside to see the grave of C.'s little son part of the price that parents often paid for life so isolated as this. I went to a duck feast, where we ate nothing at all but duck after duck with a little rice at the end, a peculiarity of the neighbourhood. It wasn't as bad as it sounds, but I felt as if I'd never be able to look a duck in the face for the rest of my natural life.

I think I could now, though, after six years of war, in Britain

I listened at the feast to stories of the coming of that fierce Red Army, not the idealistic stories of left-wing writers, but the stark and actual facts I wrestled with my colleagues about problems past and present, and I made closer acquaintance with that young preacher whose skill in debate had given me such joy a few days before. He'd been a schoolboy and a revolutionary soldier, and something of a politician. Then he heard that his father had died and his mother was ill. This was his story.

'And so I asked for three weeks' leave—one week to get from Canton to Yunnan, one week to stay and one week to go back. When the train reached Kunming, my heart was palpitating with excitement and dread. I hurried from the station to the city and looked at the house numbers, dreading what I might find. Would she be alive or dead? Before I reached home, my mother saw me from a shop and called my name. There, in the street, amid the passers-by we stood holding one another and sobbing, and the tears rolling down our cheeks. After a week, I said I must go, but she wouldn't let me go. So I asked for another month's leave, and then she wouldn't let me go and found me a wife. I knew I wouldn't go back to the Army, and got a political job in Kunming.'

My mother has done me much good.'

So he had gone on, his face beautiful in the lamplight. I said to him, 'We shan't meet again on earth, but perhaps in heaven.' 'In spite of your age you're strong,' said he. 'I think you may come again.' As I left Hueits'e, he said, 'I sincerely hope we may meet again.' 'I shall not forget you,' said I. Nor have I. Something has knit me to him and I do not and cannot forget.

On October 11th we took to the roads again and journeyed on for thirty miles over level, fertile, well-watered, beautiful country, rising later on, one or two thousand feet, to a place called Tse Chi. "Good roads, good weather, good coolies—a good start, whatever happens next!" The following day we travelled twenty-five miles to—

*"Laitupo, October 12th.* This hamlet, 'Leper Head Slope,' is good to remember, for a tall watch-tower stands in the middle of the street, apparently undamaged by the Red Army when it came. We started this morning in a cold mist, but after half an hour we turned into a new valley and walked immediately into sunshine. We climbed a precipitous hill up to the motor road, past the place 'where Mr H was robbed.' The motor road winds for miles and miles around hills and valleys, dropping gradually into the plain,

but we went by the old road of the centuries, which was more direct, as the Roman roads of Britain. Our highest point to-day was 10,000 feet and over on our right was a great mountain 4,000 to 5,000 feet above that. The weather has been superb.

*"Kungsan, October 13th* We started at 6.15 and got in at 4.30, having covered thirty-two miles of gorgeous country. We started in a frosty mist, but were soon under blue sky and white clouds, and range upon range of mountains, with plenty of foliage in the foreground. The country becomes greener and less wild as we travel south. Last night Mrs L. heard the howling of wolves. So I must have slept better than I thought, for no such sounds penetrated my mosquito net. All day we've passed, besides pack-mules and carrying coolies with their burdens of rock salt, droves of pigs, sheep, goats, bullocks (sign of Muslim influence) and horses. We lunched at a place where 'Mr and Mrs E. once found themselves in the midst of bandits.' They were able to hide in a house till the danger was past, I was told. Our greatest height to-day was again 10,000 feet, with numerous mountains rising all about us. L. and I have just been shaving in the light of a broken storm lantern, and when that failed we used his electric torch. So our inn was lit with electricity! This was our habit to save the precious minutes in the morning.

*"Yangchieh, October 14th* 'Sheep Market' will do for a translation of this name. It's another thirty-two miles nearer Kunming. To this place the Reds brought Mr Bosshardt during his year and a half's captivity, before turning aside and finally releasing him near Kunming.

"We picnicked at a place at noon which was more dead than alive, not having recovered after a recent bandit attack. This town is full of soldiers to-night, drilling and singing their marching songs, one man sang the air and the others gave the response. It would take an artist to describe our sleeping quarters in that open inn, and I won't begin. But they're good enough for tired folk.

*"Yanglin, October 15th* This will be our last night on the road. We've only come twenty miles, and to-morrow we have thirty-three to go to Kunming. We're moving on the level now, amongst the harvest rice and other crops. There are blue-clad farming people about all the time, and we are out of the wild northern and western desolate mountains.

*"Kunming* We travelled from 5.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and are

safely home at last Coming on to the Kunming Plain in the afternoon, everything seemed amazingly beautiful, backed by the western hills and the great west lake It was in striking contrast to the wild, rugged sublimity of Chaotung ”

Here we were back, too, to world news, and to aeroplanes circling overhead We'd left the bandit road and had returned to the world threatened with bandits of another order I've set things down as they occurred and impressions as I passed through them Beauty and sublimity, bandits and dirt, loneliness and the discomforts of those country inns

It was, of course, a glorious picnic to me, helped as I was by friends along many miles of the road For a generation or two, missionaries and their families have gone those journeys, taking the rough with the smooth, the peril with the peace, and facing their world with a cheer Mothers and children, too, in the face of all weathers

I've not put down these things for my sake, but for their sakes, that every man might see, through my eyes, some of the cost and the wear and tear of the making of a new world I've met one man who'd been twelve times in the hands of bandits in one year and had been twelve times released unscathed Not all have such happy experiences

These free-booters of Yunnan are perhaps rather outlaws than bandits, for the long arm of Chinese civilisation hardly extends to the fastnesses of the southern mountains The road, the railway and the aeroplane will end much of the disorder in time Meanwhile, the pioneers are enduring as they always have endured Pioneers, Oh pioneers, how much the world owes to you!

So ended another stretch of this journey of mine, sixteen days overland, through hill and dale from Chaotung How restful to be back in a city like Kunming, among my own folk, for a little while In a day or two I was to press on The real journey had hardly begun I was to go where I was needed most, and I was by no means sure of the road

## THE CHINA NOBODY KNEW

BACK in Kunming, with its dust, its refugees and its soldiers, my mind was taken up with plans to reach my friends in Hunan, which was at that time unoccupied by the Japanese, Hupeh, Hopei and Shantung, which were "occupied", Ningpo and Wenchow, which were "free," but where the coast was mostly blockaded by the Japanese; and Kuangtung with Hong Kong. This area was half occupied by the Japanese and half free. A glance at the map will show that the geographical were as great as the military difficulties. Britain was still neutral and I was technically free to travel where I wished. Whether in free or occupied territory, all roads were dislocated and journeying abnormal. The traveller had to pass from the authority which was controlling by invasion to the Chinese authority in free territory. It was evident that these were not conditions in which anything in the nature of an orderly tour could be arranged. All that I was sure of were the places and the people I wished to visit, whatever the order of visitation might be. I wanted, if possible, to tour Hunan and Kuangtung in the dry autumn weather and avoid, if I could, the extreme cold of the winter in north China. For there is Canadian winter there. There was a heavy mail-bag from various parts of China, advising me as to general conditions, roads and weathers, but I was certainly, in one respect, like Abraham. I knew the general direction, but, apart from that, nothing of where I was going. I met several travellers by bus and truck who thought the best way for me to go might be, via Kueiyang, by road. Whilst I was puzzling and perplexed, I heard of a certain Dr. Miao, of the China "International Red Cross," who was making his way to Kueiyang in his own 'Red Cross' car. Nothing could have been kinder than his reception of me, and his help on the way made the three days from Kunming to Kueiyang the happiest and most comfortable experience of the entire China journey. Meanwhile, I was meeting with travellers to and from West China, Chungking and Chengtu, and learning of conditions of war-stricken China all the time. For Kunming was increasingly the gateway into Free China, and the missionaries' generosity was strained to capacity in their care for

inland travellers They were strained, but never overstrained

I found that there had been severe rains in south Yunnan, as well as in Chaotung They had blocked the Burma Road for nearly a month and cut the railway between Kunming and Hanoi for a week or two When, a year later, Britain agreed to the closing of the Burma Road for three months, I appreciated the remark of a Chinese friend in a chop-sui restaurant in Oxford Street "Closing the Burma Road for three months doesn't matter It closes itself in the rains It's what comes afterwards that matters" Happily for Britain's reputation, Japanese behaviour was such that the Burma Road soon opened itself all right as soon as the rains were over Thoughtful Chinese had a due appreciation of Britain's difficulties in 1939

After the usual delays in starting the journey, I found Dr Miao and his car, near his lodgings, being packed up and almost ready to start in the early morning of October 20th It was a lovely little  $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton truck, with a box chassis of wood, built in Rangoon He sat in front with his wife, and they had fitted a chair behind for me There was, of course, all the luggage they could pack in, including my own Going on the level, or uphill, things were easy enough Descending the other side of steep valleys was rather a different matter The luggage had a way of working loose, and the chair of slipping about, so that I wasn't long in discovering the value of many of the muscles of my back, of whose existence I'd not previously been aware But who was going to complain of such small discomforts after the long mountain trek from Chaotung? By four o'clock that day we were in an inn at Pingyi, 150 miles on our way to Kueiyang and, ultimately, to Hunan Think of that compared with the five days to cover the same distance over hill and dale from Hueits'e to Kunming This was comfort indeed

We started in the morning early, and in seven hours had done the 150 miles to Pingyi Twenty miles an hour in comfort, instead of twenty-five miles a day with weariness, will make a lot of difference to travellers in south-west China by and by By noon we'd reached Ch'uhching and were partaking of chicken and rice in a new restaurant, with an English-speaking Chinese chef from Kunming It was an unexpected but delightful experience in rough country such as this Roads are opening China up, and this little country town had become a road junction and also a great health centre Such developments bring along all sorts of

new and up-to-date Chinese Hence this restaurant and other new things My host and chauffeur, Dr Miao, Secretary of the Kueiyang International Red Cross, had driven a car for seven years in America and knew his job

We spent the night in a new China Travel Service restaurant Mosquito nets, bedding and beds were provided. It was all clean and usable The inn, of course, was completely under Chinese management, but it's utterly different from those inns on the old salt track from Szechuan, covered with the dust of centuries and filled with the vermin which had sucked the blood of countless coolies

We went over level, good, roads most of the day, and expected to be well into the Kueichow mountains on the morrow

There were buses and lorries on this Kueiyang road in large numbers and the thirty and more rooms of our inn were soon filled up with travellers This was the tale of the morrow.

*Anlanksien, October 21st* We'd come in eight hours only 120 miles But such miles All day long we've been ascending and descending the mountains, from 4,000 to 5,000 feet up to 6,000 to 7,000 feet, and then down again We've switchbacked over four or five little passes That's putting it very mildly indeed The truth is there's hardly been so much as half a mile of straight, level road We've wiggle-waggled, zigzagged, hair-pinned and done everything a road can do Finally, we came up twenty-four hairpin bends of a steep valley, passing stranded cars as we came along" I think this piece of road must be unique in China It's very frequently photographed, and I've come across the picture of it in many magazines and papers in recent years If nothing happened to heavy lorries beyond a little breathlessness up that road, they were to be congratulated "This sort of country gives you lots of exercise in expected and unexpected places, especially when the luggage shifts and reduces your foot and knee space by one-half Dr. Miao proved an excellent driver and the car was equal to all calls on its resources"

Dr Miao, in America, had been a student of political science On his return to China, he became an adviser to the Governor of Kiangsi, he told me He had a lot to do with the handing back of the famous mountain resort of Kuling by the British to the Chinese His opposite number on the British side was Sir George Moss, then Consul-General at Hankow.

When the Japanese invasion led to that awful trek east of

countless refugees, Moss sent him a message, Miao told me "We've been opponents over Kuling, now let us work together as friends in this refugee work" No wonder he had responded and worked as the Mayor of Hankow's representative with Dr Maxwell in "International Red Cross" work What a credit such a message was to both sender and responder This "International Red Cross" to which reference is made was not the world-wide institution based on Geneva It was the united effort of the Chinese Government with men of goodwill of many nations in that time of suffering It functioned subsequently in Changsha, Kueilin, Kueiyang and Chungking, but, to avoid misunderstanding, changed its English name to "International Relief" No words suffice to describe its help to China Much of the money contributed in Great Britain by the Lord Mayor's Fund for the Relief of Distress in China and by Lady Cripps' British United Aid to China has passed through its hands It was Sir George Moss who bore witness, at that time, to the fact that British prestige in China's dark days owed more to these generous British funds than to anything else whatever He was in a position to know Well, I was thankful for journeying mercies For overland journeys in China then, as since, are wearying to flesh and blood

At Pingyi thirty or so rooms of the inn had been full to overflowing with 200 people, and plenty of babies among them They evidently still believed in families, I was happy to know, in that part of the world The babies seemed to be calling all night, and mothers and nurses were keeping them quiet with loud voices Is China the only place where this happens? I've known a mother keep her son quiet in a country chapel by means of a heavy rattle, which seemed to disturb nobody but the preacher All our room partitions were made of wood, which made an excellent sounding-board, and Dr Miao remarked next morning that "Sleep was interrupted a good deal" I wasn't inclined to accuse him of exaggeration What does sleep matter on a country journey, after all? The fresh air soon puts you right again

These inns were dearer, in proportion to their goodness, than the old type of country inn After all, it was officials and well-paid chauffeurs that were being catered for They could well afford to pay, and had the right to their money's worth, and got it

The inn at Anlanhsien was a transformed temple My single room was numbered 401, whatever that might mean, for there couldn't possibly have been 401 inmates, downstairs and up,

round this paved courtyard There were babies, however "I hear one with quite a good voice I hope she'll sleep to-night"

This Kueiyang road appeared to be much more difficult than the Burma, the Hueits'e or the Weining roads That is, as far as I'd experienced them, of course On quite long stretches of it we journeyed in the clouds We had brushed against the wet branches of overhanging bushes till we descended and came into the sunshine again. It was an all-weather road, being metalled with broken stone, but, like the Burma Road, of which it was a continuation, it was under constant repair after the rains, and needed it At last on the third evening, Sunday, October 22nd, we pulled up at the office of the "International Red Cross" in Kueiyang

I was tired Every muscle and bone in my body seemed to be aching, but ten grains of quinine and a good night's rest soon restored me How I should have fared but for Dr Miao's kindness and help I can only guess He and his good wife let me share meals with them in the inns He was a man of some importance on the road, knew how to pick his dishes, and perhaps knew the weaknesses of foreigners In consequence, I never enjoyed Chinese fare as I did those three glorious days On the whole, for wartime, Chinese food was remarkably good wherever I went.

Arrived at Kueiyang, we were given a great welcome in a temple transformed this time into Red Cross office and headquarters. There was an American professor, helping in China's salt *gabelle*, who gave hours of each day to Red Cross administration There was a bachelor doctor, L, from Cheltenham, who, having, of course, for himself, kept all the money he earned, had been able to retire early in life He was spending a year as a voluntary worker there. There was an Indian volunteer, serving as a lorry-driver There were two or three refugee nurses from Soochow They promised to do all they could to help me on the way They couldn't offer me a bed and, when I saw the congestion of their quarters, I realised that I must look elsewhere.

"Where can I go?" said I

"Well, there's a good inn in the town, and there should be room there"

"Thanks, but I've had some," I said "Is there no hope of a foreign bed anywhere?"

"You might try the C I M They've had guests, but we think they've gone Try them, anyway We're very sorry we can't help you yourselves This city is very crowded"

A little later I was standing in the porch of the C I M chapel, looking and feeling more like a tramp than a parson They were singing inside, but the missionary came out at my call "I'm a stranger here going to Hunan to visit the churches They've no room at the Red Cross, but they said you might possibly have accommodation I'm very tired and would be very grateful not to have to go to the inn "

He looked me over, in my nondescript outfit, as I explained who I really was Finally, "I'll consult my wife," he said So I stood outside that chapelful of worshippers, wondering what my fate would be, whilst he went in to ask her She, good lady, gave of her best to this wanderer, and how I bless the memory of those good Australians and the Mission to which they belong for their merciful kindness to me that night They were living very simply Their spare room dressing-table was a packing-case covered with chintz The bed I lay on wouldn't have suited a West End hotel, but it was a bed, and there was the quiet and seclusion of a mission house after days in the public eye

So, with recovered health and spirits, I was free to wander round the city, leaving my passport arrangements under the kindly care of Dr Miao and his friends That last day to Kueiyang, we'd come 150 miles of good road, mostly at thirty miles an hour, passing through the tribes—three or four different sorts at least, judging by their raiment, which was differentiated by varied needlework patterns Outwardly, these people looked like poor hill Chinese

"I also saw the press-gangs at work There were several hundred men in all being shepherded along, in a big parallelogram of rope, with soldiers at each corner, with guns and bayonets fixed, to some reception area, and I wondered how many would ever reach home again There is no conscription in China It's still the day of the press-gang " That picture haunted me then, as it haunts me still I didn't understand how folks, as ragged and bedraggled as they looked, could be turned into soldiers It was a striking contrast to the way the Japanese handled this business, as I came to know It isn't just manpower that can win wars, it matters how you handle manpower and who handles it. Somehow the sight of those poor fellows shuffling along, whilst hefty farmers were working in the fields, left a great uneasiness in my mind These were the wilds of Kueichow Perhaps things were different nearer the seat of Government I was given a helpful suggestion

later on, as you will read But the ways of press-gangs are hard

At Kueiyang I climbed the east hill and visited the Tung Shan Miao, the "East Mountain Temple," so as to view this city of 100,000, then, with refugees and soldiers, swollen to 200,000 There were wide modern streets, cinemas and all else up-to-date Modern China had come in with a rush—soldiers, chauffeurs, mechanics, electric-light workers, and refugee schools, colleges and hospitals This province had been the most inaccessible in China My guide was Y, an old pupil of Wuchang days, and now geological expert to the Provincial Government He told me that iron had been discovered locally, but not enough for use in peace-time, though all things were needed for the war I met other Chinese and foreign friends here too, all of my Hankow-Wuchang days What changes the war had caused Kueichow had been a very secluded province Till the war came and the new roads, it had been several weeks distant from the coast Now it was truly part of the country

I asked my host about his church He said his place was filled with well-to-do, well-educated Christians from the eastern seaboard, that his own humble folk were rather abashed at it all He thought two things were happening One, that the refugees were learning how widespread the Church was and how real the brotherhood The other, that his own simple folk would be permanently impressed with the realisation that the organisation to which they belonged had, beside their lowly selves, so many people of standing in society No one believed that the refugees would remain, but meanwhile things were happening to them and to their hosts, he thought Such things might be a mirror of social and national changes too People talked of the Chinese renaissance, but that had begun in the revolutions of 1911 and 1925

Out of a number of choices of route, I next determined to take bus for Yuanling in Hunan, where there were Chinese and foreign friends I wished to see My friends failed to secure me the permit I needed to get into this Hunan war area There hadn't been time to meet the responsible officials But "Go on," they said "It will be all right You've permission to leave for the south It's true you're going east, but we don't suppose you'll have any trouble" Thus fortified, and with my pouch full of visiting cards and messages of recommendation, if I should get

stranded, I went on a Hunan bus, much like the Burma Road bus, accompanied by Dr. L, who was glad to see more of China. We'd a night in a Chinese inn, a little inferior to the Kueiyang road inn, but good enough for tired men. The place was called Huang Ping. The date was October 26th. We'd come 120 miles through a regular Scotch mist and drizzle, up hill and down dale, through the Kueichow mountains over a well-worn and well-constructed road. We had seats 4 and 5 in the bus which was registered for nineteen and kept to its number of passengers. We came through still new patterns of tribal dress. Mr W of Kueiyang had told me that the Miao of these parts alone are classified as of seventy varieties, and there are lots of other tribal people in addition.

Through one more day we sped along, and towards evening were at the river dividing Kueichow from Hunan. I still was a little uneasy as to what the authorities would say about my imperfect permit. "This will be the test," I said to myself. "If I get over that bridge all right, I shall be in Hunan, and goodbye to all fears." To my relief, we sped over the bridge unchallenged and unmolested.

We were in Hunan at last. The bus ran into a barricade, which was locked behind us. Then the Customs men searched our luggage. Chinese police and soldiers love to run their hands through foreign bags. We're all a bit like children, and I can sympathise with them. They found neither opium nor fire-arms and chalked our bags with "Passed." Then military police wanted to see our passports and the trouble began. "This is all wrong. You are permitted to go south, and you've come east." "Yes. There wasn't time to get things adjusted in Kueiyang, but I'm a good man. I'm going to visit the churches."

"Where are you staying?"

"In that inn," pointing to the inn beyond the barrier.

"All right," he said.

I made my way to the inn, hoping I was through.

## FOREIGN SPY

I MADE my way to the inn. It was new, two-storied, and superior to most inns that I've seen in China Hunan is a rich province, famous for rice and tea and wood, and at ordinary times has better inn accommodation than is to be found in other provinces of my acquaintance Now new roads and traffic had come and things were evidently better still We found a nice, clean double-bedded room upstairs and were cleaning up and preparing for our evening Chinese meal when a red-cap appeared to enquire about my credentials He said, in answer to my questions, that he was twenty years of age and had come from Hong Kong He also said that the best thing I could do was to go back to Kueiyang again I told him that that was quite impossible I was a special representative from Britain, and that, in various places in Hunan and all over China, my friends were expecting me; and I proposed to go on the bus the next morning He said it couldn't be My passport was out of order I told him I was the "*Ta-Ying-Kuo Hsun-tao-Kung-hui T'sai-Hui Chung-Kan-Shih*" This was quite a mouthful and meant that I was a "General Secretary of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Great Britain" He was entirely unimpressed, never having heard of the thing Further, he suggested that I might be a spy So I pulled out my trump card—the letter of commendation from the Chinese Ambassador in London, sealed with the Ambassadorial seal He asked if he could take it to his officer. Reluctantly, I let it out of my hands After a while he returned and said that they had looked it over, but it contained no mention of Hunan, and anyhow, how had I come by it? Would I go and see the county magistrate, a military official in this area? I told him I would gladly go That didn't come off either, for he rang up the magistracy, only to learn that the official had gone home for the night There was a pretty pickle We spent hours that night interviewing this man and that, but all to no avail, and had the chagrin of seeing the bus start off next morning without us Dr L, whose only credential was a piece of paper stamped with the seal of the "International Red Cross," and who was just joy-riding, could go about where he liked I, with most serious business and the seals of a score of

countries on my passport, was held up as a doubtful character. The county official was quite nice, but quite negative. This was a war area. Rules were rules, and how could he let me on without a proper official permit? Finally, he referred the matter to his headquarters. I had the expectation of being returned ignominiously the way I'd come, to Kueiyang, unless something could be done about it.

I went to the telegraph office and wired both to Kueiyang, from which I'd come, and to Yuanling, to which place I was going. The telegraph office was a bit abnormal. They took your message and your money and gave you their receipt. For security reasons, their transmitting and receiving machines were ten miles away in the heart of the country. They, therefore, waited until they had ten or a dozen telegrams and then sent them to the country by a messenger on a bicycle. There he waited until he could collect a dozen in-telegrams. This process, with the congestion of the line with military messages, usually took three days, and there was I, stranded. After walking by the river and over the hills for three days, and obtaining no release, Dr. L. said he was going back to Kueiyang and England. I saw him off and have not heard of him since. Will he read these lines, I wonder? He'd been a good companion, and now I was "alone in China." When I got back to the inn they said "Another foreigner has come. It's a lady, and she's in the room next to you." So I knocked at her door and found she was a Latvian, an instructor in a military academy in North Hunan. She told me she was leaving shortly for Kueiyang and a guerrilla school somewhere in the south. She promised to take a note for me. This was evidently going to be quicker than telegraphing.

Soon her bus was disappearing into the dust. If, as I expect, it was her help that cleared my way, I should like to tender her my thanks some day. There was a German family of the Liebenzell Mission, affiliated to the C.I.M., in the town. I called on them and, though we were "enemies," they kindly invited me to share their home. This I was permitted to do. "Come in," he said. "We're enemies, but we belong to the family of God." I asked him what he really thought of Hitler. He replied that Hitler had given Germany back self-respect and prosperity. He regarded our criticisms and condemnations as the inevitable propaganda of politics. He'd heard of Jew-baiting, but didn't really believe it. He regretted that people should be trying to drag America and

other countries into the war Why should trouble be spread in this way? Wasn't there enough suffering in the world? He showed me a magazine which contained an attack by Bernard Shaw on Neville Chamberlain, which had amused and gratified him. "Yes," I said. "You couldn't do that in Germany or Russia, could you?" He hadn't thought of that, but admitted that you couldn't do so. Evidently he thought that Germany must win; but he was kind to his enemy and was very sorry for me in my predicament. Here was a good German, with world news available to him, as it was to us, but entirely pro-Nazi and pro-Hitler in spite of it all. Later—in Shanghai especially—I was to hear of the most fanatical and frenzied Nazis. If these things were possible in the free world, I could dimly imagine the intensity of the fanaticism in Germany itself. We went to look over a couple of Red Cross hospitals for lightly wounded men in the neighbourhood. There were 1,000 men in each, but very little skilled medical or nursing service. They were doing their best with the personnel at their disposal, and evidently many of the soldiers were getting better.

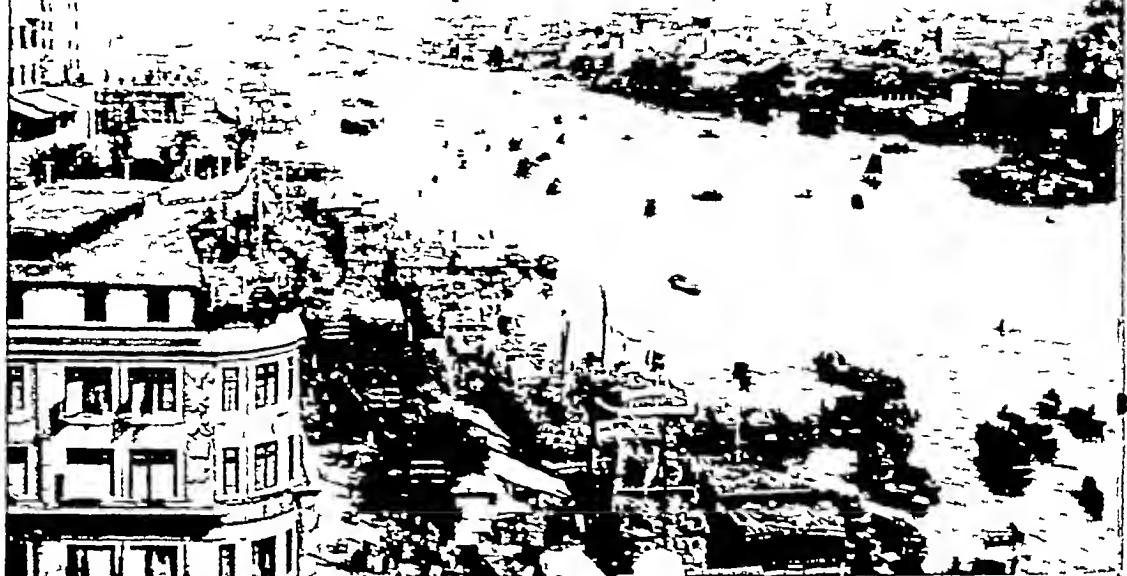
As we returned a plane came over, flying at perhaps 500 feet. We could see the men in the cockpit of the plane quite distinctly. No one seemed to know whether the plane was friend or foe or what it was doing there. When it was off and away from the town, the sirens sounded. So the A.R.P. had made up their minds at last. I have later known this to happen in England, and "How Chinesy the British are," I said. "Siren" in that town was a euphemism for temple and church bells and other devices you use when there is no electricity.

During a second alarm, I saw the people streaming over the hills in silence, and realised why they were asked not to wear white garments or red. The red clothing of a baby could be distinctly seen long after other colours had faded into the dusk of the landscape. The Chinese had a quite general belief that, even if you whispered, the pilots could hear you. So, instead of shouting to one another in loud voices, as is their wont, these Chinese mothers and children stole silently over the countryside. As they scattered, one realised that not a large proportion of them were likely to be hit.

Hardly had I got settled with my German friends before a message arrived from the magistrate. They had already cheerfully told me of a friend, stranded as I was, who had been kept with



Country chair and coolies, resting in a village street, Hunan



The City of Canton and the Pearl River Note the sky-scraper, and bridge, amongst old river boats and buildings



The Peak and beautiful harbour, Hong Kong

them for two months I went to see what was to be my fate The good man had a telegram spread out on his desk before him "I've had a message from Kueiyang," he said "Apparently you are a good man, and I'm to give you a permit and see that you are helped on your way I must enter the names of the places which you've to visit on the pass Where do you want to go?" It was a case of rapid thinking "Yuanling, Shaoyang, Lingling, Ch'angsha, P'ingkiang," said I "I can't let you go to P'ingkiang They're fighting there" "All right, make it Ch'angsha," I said, judging I could get on to P'ingkiang from the capital in due season

I called back at his office later in the day for my papers and, as I watched him in neat uniform, polished boots and shining spurs, I registered a vow that, if ever I'd to see an official again, I'd be spruced up, as far as my journey would let me be, and not look again like the weary vagabond I was

So next morning, November 2nd, 1939, found me on the bus in the left-hand front seat "See your pass?" queried that same young military policeman from Hong Kong It was all in order this time As I sailed off into the blue, he was standing there, a little pensive, I thought He'd lost his prize, and perhaps his prize-money Anyhow, he'd done his duty and taught me a lesson, and I owed him no grudge

Armed with my new pass, I had no difficulty that day We were quite evidently in the military area Each bus-refuelling station which we came to was in the hands of the military Those red-caps, as soon as they caught a glimpse of the foreigner, were round demanding his papers One lad I can never forget He got my pass, on which the details of my journey and my destination were clearly marked I watched his eyes, travelling up and down the paper He seemed to be reading every word Then he finished and said, "Where are you going?"

"Can't you read?" I replied "It's all there—Yuanling, Shaoyang, Lingling, Ch'angsha"

He read the document again, "Yes," he said "It's all right" All this, of course, had been in Chinese I'd no idea he'd a word of English Then, as he stood back, the engine was tuned up and the car began to move "Good-bye," he said in English "God bless you" So he'd been doing his duty too and was giving nothing away, but, when his duty was done, he gave me this sign that he'd been trained in a Christian school and was friend and not foe, even though a spy-hunt was on No Chinese would have said that

in English if he hadn't often heard it said What I then wrote about it all was this "All day long I was running the gauntlet of passport examinations Apparently the military police have invented a new game of 'hunt the foreigner.' They're very suspicious of spies, and one cannot blame them, but it's a nuisance to be hunted If there were any spying, it's much more likely to be among the Chinese, who, of course, can wander all over the countryside at will" Nor have the Japanese been able to control their movements either How many Chinese, in these troubled years, have moved about in disguise, who shall say? I met a good few then and have met them since After all, it was their country, you see.

That day's journey was good going except for these "*Hsien Ping*"—"military police" They were a superior type of men, well-clad, well-armed, and well-disciplined—a sort of *corps d'élite* Most of them had been muddle school, i.e. secondary school, pupils, and, of course, they were only doing their duty The amazement to me, as I look back, is that I was allowed to travel through the military area at all For military area it was One of our stops was at Chihfang, where an aerodrome was located Two days later it was bombed by the Japanese For most of the day, the road was level We'd quite left the mountains and were bowling along the harvested plains of one of China's most fertile provinces The "rice-bowl" the journalists have called it Well, we were going merrily along and had just reached a tiny hamlet, a bare one or two mud cottages at the side of the road, when suddenly there was a squeak and a blast and we were halted at the side of the road with our front left wheel punctured The bus carried no spare wheel, and no tools After all, such things only increase the weight and, if you're not expecting an accident, why bother with them? The Chinese are inveterate gamblers, but they'd gambled wrong that time We were bundled out, luggage and all, beside the little inn They set off back with the empty vehicle to the nearest bus hospital There we stayed, quite stranded and without any idea of what was going to happen We drank tea and ate peanuts from the local shop, chatted together, walked up and down, when we'd sat about long enough, to try to keep warm Yet this lone foreigner somehow somehow wasn't allowed to feel his isolation We were all travellers together and in like case Kindly folk the Chinese are unless they have suspicion or a grievance

The afternoon grew late I could see myself spending the night on a hank of straw on the mud floor of that inn, when, joy of joys, the bus rolled up again cured, and we clambered back to our seats, so much more pleased than if we'd never been without her

After an hour or two, we came to a broad river without a bridge On the road leading down to the water were seven or eight trucks and buses waiting for their turn at the ferry We took our place in the line and were soon running over two footboards into the body of the freight-junk, and so we rode over with two other cars But how slow What a target for enemy bombers—a target that they didn't fail to hit on a later day

After the long delay, we were badly behind our time schedule and had to finish our journey in the dark We could feel ourselves bumping, twisting and climbing over rising ground, we finally stopped near a river bank, in pouring rain with boat-lights dancing on the water The other side of the river was our destination, Yuanling I'd never all my life been more alone on a Chinese road I'd no companion, no servant, no coolie even, and I'd never been near the place before A coolie offered to take my luggage and pilot me across The mud-bank was as slippery as Chinese river banks can be Then, in the dark, we'd to walk a wet and slippery plank on to our boat I gripped my coolie and was soon safe in the *hua-tse*, as we call the row-boats in these parts How it poured with rain How slowly we seemed to move When we got to the other side, there was another slippery plank, and a much longer and stickier mud-bank to negotiate before we were climbing some steps and going down a *hong-tse*, "ginnel," to the street This was clear proof that there was no sprain left in that ankle of mine

When we arrived on the street it must have been nine o'clock There were lights in some of the shops, but no passers-by, as we stood in the rain, at a loss to know where to go or what to do Across the street was a Chinese under a great oiled-paper umbrella with its bamboo stick "Where are you going?" said he

"I wish I knew I've not been here before I'm a stranger in these parts I'm looking for an American missionary, but I don't know his name (Chinese name, that is) I think his Church is called 'Fu Ts'u Huei,' but I'm not sure Can you help me?"

"I think you're all right," he said "Go straight on down this road for 200 yards, take the second turn to the left, and go up some steps Then ring the bell I think you'll find him there"

Thanking him, we went on, and were soon ringing at the bell of Mr W, and he and his wife were bidding me welcome, as though I'd been the prodigal returned, in true American style "Come in We wondered if you'd had to turn back We've been out for you, but there was no word of you Come in, at least we've got a warm stove" Their servants had gone home for the night, but with their own hands they turned to and cooked me ham and eggs and lavished on me characteristic American hospitality. "You'll have to be up early to-morrow," they said "Because of the constant bombing, we live in this city from six to ten in the morning and six to ten in the evening, leaving the other daylight hours to take refuge in if the alert goes and the bombers come The Roman Catholic bell is the alarm signal But it's all right at night It's the days that we fear."

I'd only met these kind friends once or twice years before in their home at Yochow, on the edge of the T'ung T'ing Lake in North Hunan Here they were living, refugees, with hundreds of refugee scholars I'd no claim on them at all, but, somehow, every missionary in distress knows he has the freedom of the great missionary family You take these things for granted, till you find how remote from one another neighbours may live and move in a London or provincial suburb It was November 2nd when I reached Yuanling, and next morning I found myself writing.

"This city is very beautiful, situated on a broad river, among the mountains It's hard to believe, as this morning I look out over the lovely scene, that it's been bombed seven times already and is under constant threat from the air The road from Kueiyang here was 392 miles Apart from breakdowns, this journey is normally done by bus in three days, instead of the seven that have been forced upon me"

As I'd left Kueiyang, an American lady, an old acquaintance in Wuchang, much moved at meeting an old friend as she refugeeed in Kueiyang, had said to me, "The Lord be with you," and then, as an afterthought, "I believe He is with you." Was it just wishful thinking?

## IX

### CITIES OF REFUGE AND THEIR INHABITANTS

*Y u P'eng chih Yuan-fang lai, puh ih loh hu?*—"When a friend comes from a distant place, is there not rejoicing?" This is one of the most frequently quoted sayings of Confucius

Those foreigners and Chinese living in Yuanling, this refugee city, certainly rejoiced with me and gave me the welcome of a lifetime

As I reached the foot of the stairs early next morning, entering the door was the Chinese friend of whom I've written in *China, My China* as "Go-ahead Liu" What a welcome he gave me! "We're so glad to see you We feared you'd never get here How long will you be able to stay?"

"Just long enough to see you all Then I must be off My journey's badly delayed and there are people waiting for me I'm not going on by myself if I can find a travelling companion making for Shaoyang, though Do you know of anyone?"

He thought there was a Mr T who was going in that direction He'd enquire and let me know Meanwhile, there were lots of people eager to see me Whether my stay was long or short, he himself was at my absolute disposal, and I mustn't hesitate to call on him

"But you've got your own duties and responsibilities How can I presume upon your kindness?"

"The Church has sent you out to comfort us at a time like this You're suffering delays and other annoyances Do you think we mind how much time and trouble we spend on you?" he said

So the matter was settled I willingly gave in and had him for my daily guide, philosopher and friend, and I think we shall both be forgiven

That first morning I looked out over the city and saw the Roman Catholic Cathedral, with its bell-tower, standing in the midst of the houses In an hour or two that bell was tolling the "*Ching-pao*"—the "alert"—and then the "*Ching-chi Chin-pao*"—the "alarm" These were new Chinese words to me, as they were to the Chinese—war words which China had never known before We watched the people scurrying with their bundles on to the hills and among the graves outside the city walls I noticed that, alarm or no alarm, some made a daily practice of evacuating to

the country after breakfast and returning at dusk There was no further alarm that day and, by and by, the "All clear" was rung. So the enemy planes had passed elsewhere We wondered what pitiful, undefended place had taken the punishment We were to learn that it was Chihfang, which I had passed on the previous day This place was not captured till 1944, and in May, 1945, was at last delivered from the hands of invading Japanese. They were still far enough away from it in 1939

In the course of the next day or two I was to see how the entire business quarter of the city had been destroyed by bombs and fire Yet, after six each evening, the town strangely revived again The road was swept, and then thronged with garlic-breathing people, buying, selling, talking, shouting There was no fear of the enemy at night Stalls were set up at the sides of the street in the rubble of the bomb-broken shops Hucksters, "*hsiao mai-mai*," "small business," we call them, were carrying their wares swinging from their shoulder-poles You could buy bowls of soup, roasted chestnuts and potatoes, and "*mien*," Chinese noodles, in its garlic-flavoured gravy, all piping hot The whole length of the street was "*reh-lao*"—"Hot and noisy", "*reh-lao-teh-hen*"—"very crowded," and happy in the darkness By ten o'clock the people had faded away and the street was empty again In the dread daylight, Yuanling was like a ruined city of the dead For the terror flew by day and not by night Walking out of the city one day when the alarm was on, I paused by a gateway over which was inscribed that this was a reception and welfare centre for recruits Thinking of those sad, bedraggled, down-at-heels victims of the press-gang near Kueiyang, in their imprisoning ropes, shepherded along by troops with fixed bayonets, I told my friend Liu I couldn't imagine such manpower facing the Japanese "Well," he said, "that's where they put them They feed them up for three months before real drill begins and, after three months of that treatment, they're very different material" He was a kindly Chinese, that friend of mine He would never ride in a rickshaw because he thought a rickshaw made a man into a member of the brute creation Yet that was his judgment about the effect of the welfare centre upon the raw material recruited by the presss-gang. He knew his people and had seen the results After all, he was a teacher and a man of peace He didn't entirely dispel the uneasiness in my mind For how could I forget that sorrowful scene near Kueiyang?

There were two great boarding-schools, 300 pupils in each, in that city, for boys and for girls. They'd been evacuated from Ch'angsha and were more thronged in exile than in their peace-time places. The Yale Boys' School had three young Yale men on its staff. Two were just out and had been gaoled in Kunming for taking photographs, in wartime, of placards on the street. So they'd already learned a thing or two. They were all sharing the inconvenience of a crowded building with their Chinese friends. I was to find this sharing of troubles together quite characteristic of the life everywhere of missionaries and Chinese. The third teacher took me along the lovely riverside to the place outside the city where, in old Government buildings, the Junior School was lodged. The water was flowing, clear as crystal, through the green and wooded banks. The blue sky and fleecy clouds added to the beauty. It was like the English countryside upon a summer's day. Suddenly we were back in tragic China again, counting the regular bomb-pits, in and alongside the water, that marked the falling of a stick of bombs. He told me how the planes moved up the stream until, at a certain point, they turned and loosed their messengers of death. One bomb had come down through a classroom, but happily the boys were away over the hills. "They can run," he said. "Since that bombing, when the alert rings, they seize their books and cross the hill behind the school. The teachers follow and the lessons go on in the fields until the 'All clear' sounds and they return to their school and perhaps to their rice. I've seen you before," he said. "Two years ago at Swanwick. Do you remember?"

I couldn't say I did.

"Well, I remember. You'll stay to lunch?"

"I can't. Guests are coming to meet me."

"Tea, then?" he questioned.

"No, I'm going to a Chinese meal."

"Could you come to supper?"

Again I had to decline.

"What about breakfast to-morrow?" He wasn't to be denied.

When I refused that too, "You're the first visitor from the outside world since these terrible things began," he said. It was the human counterpart of the lovely river, the sunshine, and the bombs. Though I couldn't share their hospitality, we made up in other ways before the visit was done. Does he remember, I wonder? There was no other reason for my

travels except to bring some comfort to Chinese and others, such as he

In the evening of that day, I was entertained to a sumptuous Chinese meal by business men in the town—evacuees, all of them, and all old pupils of mine in Wuchang. Apart from the usual courtesies, stories, reminiscences and small-talk, their main concern, as their juniors at Hsichow (p. 66), was to know when their old school was to be opened again “No school that does not continue now will have any chance in the China that follows victory.” Well, it has been opened a long time now, but that was their judgment, anyhow. Here are notes of other ways in which I employed my time.

*November 5th* “I met the company of our refugees from Hunan and Hupeh yesterday afternoon. They told me there were 100 all told, of all ages, in the city. More than fifty, nearly all boys and girls attending school, turned up to the meeting. Their parents had just stayed in their old homes, wherever they happened to live, but the lads and lasses had been told to move. From memories of their parents’ faces, I recognised some of them. These were sons and daughters of old friends, preachers, teachers, doctors and members at various stages of their education. What moved me most was that Liu and his friends were keeping this company together, preparing for future service when they could go home again.

*November 6th* “Just as we were finishing our meal the warning went and then the urgent alarm. I was kept over there, in a little dug-out on the hillside, for four hours till the ‘All clear’ came and people were allowed to go about again. It would be well to go about with a book or writing material in one’s pocket to avoid the waste of a lot of good time.”

How naïve that sounds in England in 1946!

“This morning I’ve been over the very considerable property of the Church here. They obtained it with indemnity money, after the murder of a China Inland missionary in 1901. I remember now, not only the C.I.M. but other Churches had declined to use the money. These people took and used the indemnity, building houses, schools and hospitals for the good of the people. Yet, they confessed, it had taken nearly forty years to clear themselves of the stigma of having used such money.” This was one of the difficult problems in China through the stormy period of riot and murder. The general verdict to-day would be that, whatever [the

governments concerned might do, it's unwise for Churches to get involved, however good their motives may be You're not judged by your own so much as by your critics' motives pretty generally in this life

One morning a man sought me out, a Chinese, whom I'd known in my own province as a clergyman His story was that, through the sins of another, he had lost his religion and turned from his call, resigning his place in the ministry Through a remarkable escape in the air raids, prayer and religion had come back to him, and he would like to be restored and preach again—one more illustration as it seemed to me, of our common humanity, Chinese and British I promised to talk to his Bishop about him as I went on my way He'd had a most remarkable deliverance and felt himself "a brand plucked from the burning "

One night we sat in the house and talked of Pearl Buck, whose sister was the wife of one of W's colleagues Is it a breach of confidence to put down what she wrote from her magnificent home in America, with her six adopted children, this successful author, child of that dour Presbyterian missionary, "*Fighting Angel*"? "I'm just the simple Pearl you always knew," she wrote to her friends in far-away China Somehow it was good to know, just there, that her successes had not spoiled the simplicity of her spirit I'd read practically everything she'd written, but this sentence was best of all

My fortune was in at last Not only was Mr T going on the road, but he found a white Russian, a Mr R, who was moving across the province in his own car He was an official of the Government Salt *Gabelle* We people in Britain take our salt for granted, like the air we breathe In India and China they know better Salt in China is a Government monopoly, and the cost of it includes the only universal tax in the land For no Chinese or any other human being can live without salt Our Russian friend was an employee of this salt administration

The car wasn't perfect The place where the water goes in soon developed a leak, and we had to stop and fill up from time to time But it was good to be riding in a private car rather than on the front seat of a public bus When the red-caps, the military police, accosted us, as they did at every refuelling station on the road, my Russian host produced his permit to travel and said "Salt *Gabelle*," and we said nothing, like Brer Rabbit As we climbed the mountains, crossed the rivers, or threaded our way through

the fields, we talked of many things "The British must be very stupid," our host said, "if they think that Russia would be interested in the preservation of Poland Why should Russia help Britain in that?" Then he added "Russia, anyhow, does not want war Stalin has plenty on his hands without that He knows, if war comes, the country will be split in two Russia will keep out of this war, you'll see" Was this wishful thinking or was it what other Russians thought in 1939? Did Hitler, by his attack, unify Russia as Japan had unified China? Well, that was what Mr R said, and who was I to contradict him? That evening I recorded "To-night I'm halfway to Shaoyang, at a place called Anchiang, and have been in clover, accompanying a Russian and one or two Chinese members of the Salt *Gabelle* in a real Ford car We've one big mountain to cross to-morrow and then, about two, I should be at Shaoyang Mr T is sleeping, heads and tails, with me in this Chinese inn, and our Russian friend is across the passage in a room of his own "

"Heads and tails" is the way Chinese sleep to make the most of their *per-wos*—"wadded quilts"—and bedding Your head lies at the top of the bedding and your companion's head at the bottom His feet reach to your shoulder and your feet to his You've only to try it to see how economical this is of the bed-clothes. There's nothing to be taught to the Chinese about economies, you see Fancy two elderly missionaries sleeping like that You'd never imagine it when you saw them in the pulpit So, on November 8th, I walked into Shaoyang and had had my tea before the men, who had gone to meet the bus, returned, to find me sitting at the table It was good to be among one's own folk again In a very short time a telegram arrived with the news that Lingling had been bombed and two theological students had been killed It was all very sad and cruel Millions of the Chinese who hardly knew of the existence of Japan knew them those days as murderers of civilians from the air Our journey to Shaoyang had been over a mountain of some 4,000 feet We skirted the edge of the precipice for miles It was all very grand and beautiful, and the road was a great tribute to the patient endurance of China and the Chinese

At the end of that perfect day came a "Welcome Meeting" The Chinese house, turned chapel, was packed with 300 people of all ages and sizes There was no electric light. That had failed in these war years There was no light at all but the little tin

lamps of vegetable oil with the cotton wick, as in Palestine 2,000 years ago To this was added just a storm lantern or two for the leaders and the preacher I did my tired best with the message of comfort I was delivering everywhere It all seemed so futile and incoherent, and I wondered if they could possibly understand my "*Han Hwa*"—"Hankow words" At the close C seized my arm and said, "Oh, what a meeting! They'll never forget it" If so, it must have been the occasion and not the words that they would remember I never felt so useless in all my life What matter so long as harried folk were comforted At the close of the day, a Swede, a German, a Jew, Americans and British, all with one accord, listened in to an account of an apparent attempt to bomb Hitler They were all filled with a common satisfaction "Yet Hitler's removal is probably better by a more natural 'process,'" I wrote that night on November 10th, 1939 The Jew was a refugee doctor working in the hospital The others were Shaoyang missionaries Shaoyang is an old walled town beside the river As with so many central China towns, the walls were being demolished and giving place to roads Among the missionaries were two ladies, Misses W and D, who had nearly lost their lives in an overturned charcoal bus They were better again, marvellously recovered from their burns In Shaoyang there was a great hospital and schools, contributions from the Church to the awakening and welfare of New China

General Feng Yu-Siang had been there recently and had preached in the chapel, but no one was interested, in those days, in the arrival of highly-placed Chinese officials For wherever Chinese officials went Japanese bombers were sure to go In consequence, already, when I was there, the place had been bombed five times The best air-raid shelter for a city of this kind were the grave-mounds outside the city walls As you lay between two graves, nothing could get you except a direct hit

After talking as usual with Chinese and missionaries, I had to press on again This time an old friend, B, was to accompany me, and from this date on I hardly ever took to the road without a companion of my own connection So good-bye to C and Misses W and D, and the others Strange and unwanted experiences came to them later, the bitterest of all to Miss D, interned for years in Hong Kong, and waiting her chance now, as I write, to return to her nursing in China

## HUNAN'S BOMBED TOWNS AND COUNTRYSIDE

THE next stage of the journey we travelled on a charcoal bus, making for the road and railway centre of Hengyang. We were eager to reach Lingling to see if we could be any use after the raid. That bus was very different from any charcoal-driven car in Britain. In England the generator is a complicated structure that is drawn along on a trailer. This one consisted of a tall cylinder on the left-hand side of the driving seat. There was thus only access to the cab on the right-hand side and no egress on the other. We sat up in the front and learned all about it. Fortunately, the road was level all the way, winding among the rice-fields. Here and there we skirted banks on which tea shrubs were set out in rows. Our engine had no puff to climb hills, and descending hills would have been a dangerous matter. Our maximum speed was twenty-five miles per hour, and of that I was glad. For five years before I'd been in an ordinary bus on a Hunan road hereabouts, when the driver had got excited and tried to do thirty, with the most disastrous results. If it hadn't been for other travellers' tales, I should have said that the reckless drivers in China were mostly dead, like the reckless chickens, dogs and pigs that ignored them. After all, there may be something in my notion, for all that others say. For only survivors survive.

Well, our bus went quietly along at twenty-five miles and then stopped at a teashop after an hour or two for a rest. When the driver resumed his seat, do what he would, he couldn't make her move. The cylinder had got overheated, and some gadget was out of gear. We were amused to see him pick up a bucket of cold water and souse the offending cylinder. That did the trick immediately, and off we went again. Every time we stopped the machinery refused to act. Each time it refused, the bucket of cold water was applied successfully. It's not easy to catch out John Chinaman. I've seen a Chinese locksmith open a Chubb's lock with a bit of wire in a jiffy. He may not understand the science, but he does know the art of things.

We started that day at 6.30 a.m., travelled through lovely autumn sunshine, and had reached Hengyang at 11 a.m. There we were disappointed not to find a bus, but were told a train

would be leaving for the south at 6.30 p.m. So we made our way to the station and the station inn. The whole area had been devastated with fire-bombs during the raid four or five days before. Buildings in China are often flimsy wood structures with the thinnest of partition walls. The advantage is that they can be erected almost as quickly as they are destroyed, and here, in less than a week, completely new houses were already built and inn-keepers were ready with their toothsome food.

I shouldn't have believed such things possible had I not seen them, but in my diary of November 11th is the record. Even Nature takes longer than that to recover.

America was neutral then, and no one dreamed that, in December, 1944, a big American aerodrome at Hengyang would be defended by surrounded Chinese troops, for six weeks, until every man was killed or wounded, against the Japanese invader. The Americans didn't think it could be held for six days. There are plenty of stories on the other side, but we, who've known the China of the Revolution, are by no means unaware of the heroism of her fighting men. Was not this whole eight years of resistance, unarmed against military might, most mysteriously and unexpectedly heroic? The Japanese can bear witness to that.

Near Hengyang was the famous pilgrim mountain, the Nan Yoh Shan, where Chiang Kai-shek had his headquarters for a little time when driven from Hankow in 1938, before moving to Chungking. Hengyang is a large city and a junction on the Canton-Wuchang Railway. What I was not prepared for was to find that it was the terminus also of a new wartime railway to Kuelin in Kwangsi and beyond.

The Burma Road isn't the only incredible thing that has been done in China's wartime emergency. Here was a new railway completely moved from Honan and the north as the Japanese invaded the country. Rails, sleepers, wagons, engines had been moved hundreds of miles in the face of the Japanese advance. There were trucks from every railway in China, from Mukden in the north to Hong Kong and Kowloon, a most curious and illuminating assortment of carriages. The secret was China's manpower, patience and hard work. It was on the new railways that we travelled that night from 6.30 till eleven. We had a good Chinese meal and sleeping berths. There were not many passengers, but China's communications were kept open, whatever the danger from bombing.

That afternoon B and I had been out in the sunshine among the graves when a plane came over. It was probably a Chinese plane, but there were a few pot shots at it. We just lay among the graves and continued our talk till the sky was clear again.

We left the train at a river mart called Lenhsuit'an—"Cold Water Rapids"—and started along an uneven country street in the rain and the darkness to an inn that B knew. There we took a room, whilst B went off to bargain for chairs and coolies. I could hear him talking and bargaining as I, half sleepily, drank the ever-blessed tea and tried to rest. About midnight he came in and said, "Now you must decide. You can stay here in comfort for the night"—some comfort I thought—"or, the chairs and coolies are all engaged, and we can start at once if you like." With air-raids about, coolies were more willing to travel by night than by day. So I put away that "comfort" and we went out into the pitch blackness of the night. Great shadows of engines and trucks loomed up at us out of the darkness. We stumbled over railway lines and uneven roads. Soon the men's experienced feet found the old coolie track. Slowly but surely they covered the eighteen miles. By day it would have been a five hours' journey, stops and all. By night it took us till 8.30 in the morning. To the swing of the chair and the chant of the bearers' voices, we both dozed off a good deal and hoped to be fresh enough for the morning service. We were too late, as it happened, in those war days. We found the doctor and his wife at home, but the others were already at service. After a wash, I went across to the minister's house and saw W. going up the steps. "How are you, old man?" I cried to this companion of other journeys and other days.

For answer an ashen face turned on me. How he must have suffered. "Don't you know what's happened?" he said.

"Yes, of course. That's why we've hurried here."

This is the story of the raid he couldn't forget. A guerrilla school was to be opened. Madame Chiang Kai-shek was announced as the guest of honour. She didn't come, but nine Japanese bombers arrived, and blasted their way through the main street of the defenceless city, killing and wounding at least 100 people in a smallish place. Among them were two theological students who had failed to go to earth, not knowing what blast could do.

My friend, without any training or preparation, had to go and gather up what was left of their ghastly remains and then try to

maintain the courage of their thirty fellow students. No wonder he had a haggard face that morning, but he and his fellows were bravely carrying on. Later, I went through the hospital wards and saw some of the human wreckage that the raid had left behind it. The doctor and his wife were continuing in the city with their little son. "Do you think it's right for you all to stay?" I said. "Will it have any ill-effect on him?"

"We've talked it all out," said this quiet Irishman. "He's too young to trouble much. We think, at a time like this, it's better to be together than divided. We're sure we're right. We'll just take what comes to us."

I was to hear an American father and mother with two little children in Hengyang repeat that conviction, almost word for word. I was to hear English and Scotch folk say it too. They'd thought it out: they would take what came to them.

Little did they know that, for half the people that I met on that journey, it would mean years in internment, for some a violent and untimely death, for others flight and loss of all their goods. Yet to-day I've no evidence that there have been any regrets for anything they've suffered. All China, that knows, is grateful for their comradeship. They can't speak for themselves: their lives and the gratitude of many who were ready to perish speak for them. The end of that story is not yet.

It was here in Lingling that there was first borne in upon me, on this journey, a sense of direction. You'll find it too in other travellers' stories in ancient and modern times. I said nothing to anyone then, or for long afterwards, but there I was, after delays in Rangoon, delays in that Hunan border town, and delays at other parts of the way. The journey had been replanned from time to time. Always I was an optimist, seizing whatever opportunity might come of pressing forward through seven months and more of inland travel. Always there was a sense of urgency, a doubt as to whether the end would be reached. If I'd sat down and determined at what point it would be most useful to be at Lingling, in all that time I could only have chosen the particular day on which I arrived.

When such things happen once or twice we talk of luck, chance and coincidence. When in a long and difficult journey coincidences repeat themselves, not once but twenty times, your sense of wonder grows into a sort of conviction. I wasn't in myself any particular use, but I was the symbol of others' care and sympathy,

and I was there at the very hour when need was greatest. This sense of a guiding hand grew with me as the journey continued. I shall make few references to it, for these events are intimate and personal.

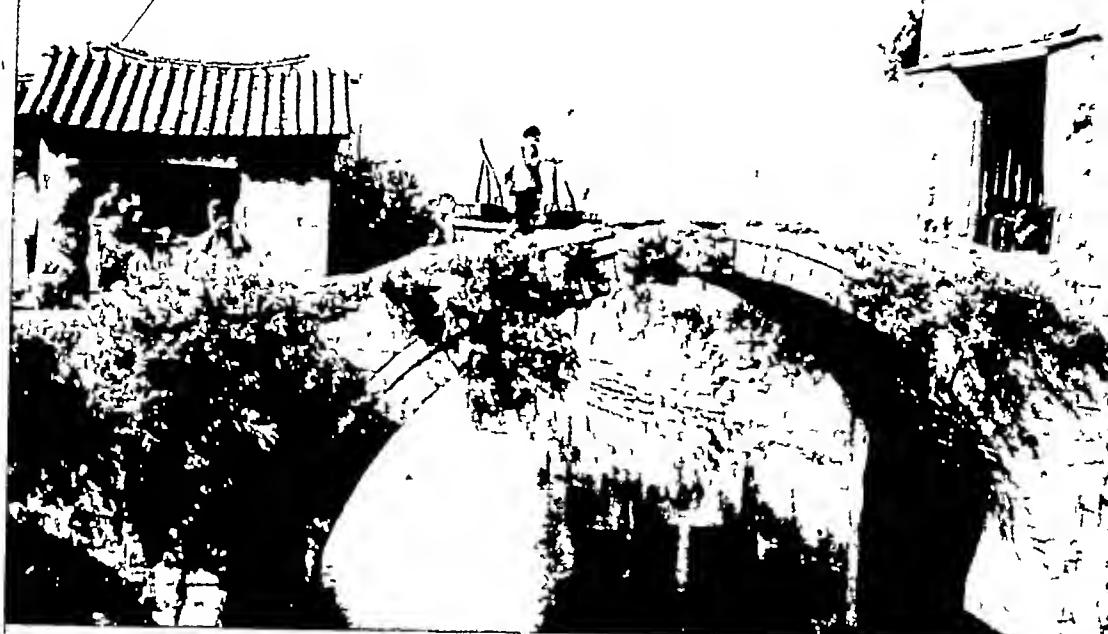
To me the experience grew to be so vivid that I half wondered if a dear friend, who passed on just as this journey began, had been given special charge of me upon the road. It was fanciful, of course, but the very fancy was a witness to the reality of this experience. So clear was it that later on, in tangle after tangle, I just ceased to worry and said to myself, "I wonder what the good Lord is going to do this time?" It's in hours of stress and strain, when you have done your best and all human powers are at an end, that this experience of direction comes. I'm not arguing about it, merely relating facts. Curiously, it was in a bombed city, with shattered homes, sudden death and broken bodies, that this conviction began in me. Why were you selected? Why were they destroyed, do you ask? I will not answer that except in the words of Confucius once to his frightened followers: "As long as Heaven has use for me, what can the men of K'uang do to me?" Was it not Socrates who spoke of his "daemon," who warned him from coming harm? There are other things, which this is not the time or place to say, except that, for me, these journeying experiences confirmed the belief that materialism is no explanation of this universe. It leaves so much out. If it be not true, then it can be no guide for man or beast, class or nation. If the blind lead the blind, will they not both fall into the ditch? I wish some of the great ones of the earth could have taken my journey.

There was little news in Lingling. "According to the Chinese newspapers," I wrote on November 13th, "Holland and perhaps Belgium are now definitely threatened by Germany, whilst America is beginning to talk to Japan. What a world!" How remote it all seems now. What a world, indeed, in which since then almost every nation on the earth has been involved in war.

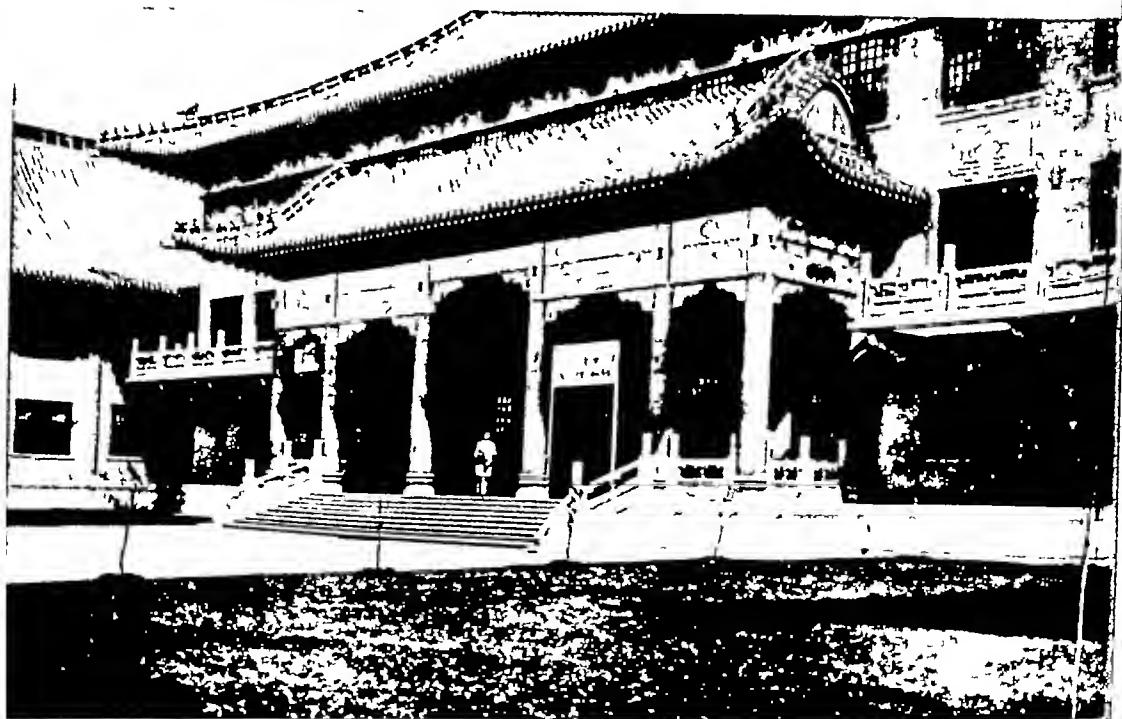
I gathered that, on the whole, this place had been a quiet backwater and as little affected as most places till that last dreadful week. "If the Japanese knew what they did, they couldn't have done such things to helpless civilians, anyhow. The results are too ghastly for words. The dead are the happy ones, I thought after seeing the hospital." That was written in 1939. Who of us is not involved now? After the hospital, I visited the school, half of which was moving out to a quieter place in the country.



'Venice in China' A canal scene in Wenchow, Chekiang



China's ancient glory An old arched bridge with carriers



Modern architecture The Sun Yat-sen University, Canton

Boys and bundles were already packed, but there was no moving in the rain The weather was miserably cold and wet for the time of the year, but there would be no "alarms" under such conditions, they said

That "quiet backwater" had later an American aerodrome which the Japanese captured on September 7th, 1944 It was due to the kindness and help of American pilots that, here and elsewhere, so many of my friends were able to get to places of safety in the debacle of that autumn Who then dreamed that America and Britain by 1941 would be China's allies, forced from their neutrality by Japanese aggression? It's well that neither the Chinese nor we could see so far down the road of calamity If we could see ahead, should we walk so steadfastly? It's faith and insight rather than foreknowledge that keep you upright on your feet

[ For two or three days I was doing the usual things, meeting with Chinese friends old and new, gathering with missionaries of all denominations, talking over common problems, hopes and fears, bringing perhaps a little of the comfort and breath of the outside world in these days and years of trouble. It was on Bishop Stephens' compound, where we met one night, that the raid had been most devastating and the students had been blasted to death In China we've our denominations, but we are all exiles and mingle very freely It's our usual experience to consult together The ecclesiastical traditions and habits of the homeland seem very rigid by comparison, in spite of all the mutual consultation that now is normal here So this visit drew to an end

In 1934, in days of peace, I had been this way before Then W, the theological tutor, and I had journeyed over low hills from Shaoyang to Lingling We'd spent two or three nights in Chinese inns and chapels, and had been hampered on our way by opium-smoking coolies There were no charcoal buses then and no roads or railways—just quiet trudging through field and tea plantation and wood We never neared Hengyang, except upon our homeward way, when a Chinese chauffeur, as I have said, jumped the bus off the Ch'angsha road Chassis and wheels parted company We dry-docked into an autumn paddy-field and, as I watched my fellow passengers disappearing in haste through the windows of the bus, I remarked to W, "I suppose this is what they call an accident" We all escaped scot free but for a scratch or two, but that was another journey On November 16th I was writing

"We propose going by boat to-morrow morning to the railway at Lenhsuit'an, and so start on the Ch'angsha journey." Shall I ever see that lovely compound at Lingling again, I wonder, and what is it like now after Japanese troops and local looters have done their worst with it?

## CH'ANGSHA, "UNCONSUMED BY FIRE"

THIS is the tale of our journey to Ch'angsha After a number of delays at the riverside at Lingling, we left by a small Chinese boat It was just the ordinary sailing-boat, with the well of the vessel roofed over with rounded rush-mats You couldn't stand up, but there was plenty of room to sit or lie Mostly, unless it's very hot weather, you spread your *pei-wo* on the wooden floor and lie reading or talking on that in comparative comfort Chinese boats are, as a rule, spotlessly clean The boards, and all the boat, are varnished, and you take off your boots before crawling under the mat roof into the cabin Navigable rivers run slowly and twist backwards and forwards, following the line of least resistance The boatman poles or rows when he must, and avails himself of every puff of wind We'd a good strong breeze that day which was sometimes behind us, sometimes on either side of us and sometimes a *tu-feng*—a "head wind" It wasn't the wind that changed, but the winding of the river that caused the variations There's little river travel in Britain except for exercise and pleasure In China there's much A little later I was to travel for six days in a Chinese boat of this kind It's as restful a way as there is, unless you are pressed for time Our party consisted of B, H and myself, a Chinese nurse who had failed to make good in Lingling and was glad of a free passage home, the Lenhsui T'an preacher, H's "boy," and a gentleman who just turned up and squatted on the boat So we were seven The boatman said he was his friend, and who were we to deny it? It's very rare in China for some "friend" not to turn up and try to travel at your expense China's a tolerant land The hitch-hikers of wartime England will appreciate that "friend" What a typical creature he is No China story would be complete without him I think such friends must wait in the riverside tea-shops watching for their opportunity to "jump" a boat We travelled downstream and, with the help of the wind and the current, were in Lenhsuit'an after a five hours' journey, in contrast to the eight hours through the night on the outward road The day had been wet and cloudy, and consequently the voyage was uneventful There were no planes to be feared on such a day as this We were soon scrambling

up the slippery mud bank to a street that seems to be developing greatly, owing to the coming of the railway. From a fishing village and a ferry, Lenhsutan had become an important junction of river, rail and road traffic. The place swarmed with refugees coming, going and staying. Soldiers, too, were always passing through.

We quickly got rooms in an inn; then went to the tiny upper room of a chapel, containing insufficient accommodation for a growing place. After that, back to the river for a warm Chinese meal, and then once more to the chapel for the Wednesday-evening class-meeting. There, to my very great joy and his, in this unexpected place, I met a Chinese friend who combined the occupations of photographer and watch-mender. He was a refugee, of course, and had cleared out of Shihhuiwo, in the Tayeh ironworks area of Hupeh, before the oncoming Japanese armies. He was at least 600 miles away from home, a refugee in a strange province, but had eventually fallen on his feet. He was a lay preacher, and his religion had given him that stability of character which is often remarked on by non-Christian Chinese of Christians whom they know. He was doing excellently in business, this place never having met a watchmaker such as he. He told me too how useful his photography had been. The passing soldiers particularly, were glad to send their portraits home. Just like Britain, isn't it? Well, unless he's suffered in subsequent incursions, he'll have quite a nice little competence to take home again when peace comes at last. Some refugees in China, as in Britain, have the ability to make good wherever they may be.

After service we lay down till 1.30 a.m., when we went through the rain to the station. The train was late, and we didn't get off till three next morning. Once more we lay down in our clothes, in a first-class sleeper this time, by force of circumstances, and so reached Hengyang in time for breakfast. There we found a China Travel Service man who took over our luggage and told us of the trains to Luk'ou, the northern terminus of the Canton Railway in these uncertain days. This was the railway from Wuchang to Canton and Hong Kong. The Chinese had destroyed large sections of it north and south of Ch'angsha when they could not hold it any longer. They still held a length of several hundred miles from Luk'ou in Hunan to Kukong in Kwangtung. Kukong the Japanese finally captured on January 28th, 1945. Right up to then the railway had been in Chinese hands and the

invaders had had no through road The Chinese had held it intact, though frequently bombed, of course, for more than seven years and only lost it in the end because the Japanese, battered by sea, made a desperate and successful attempt to have land communication from north to south of China through their need to retaliate on the American airfields Possibly war-weariness had got the Chinese down, possibly it was the evergreen military fault of over-confidence that caused the debacle There may have been political reasons, too In the event, the Japanese were only there a few months before their final defeat We made our way to the American Presbyterian hospital and found Dr and Mrs N kind and helpful in every possible way He took us round to see the officials on passport matters and then, at last, I was really fitted with the appropriate papers to get out of the province either into Kwangsi or, by Kukong, Kwangtung, to Hong Kong

Hengyang had been badly bombed again and again There were lots of evidence of this But the Ns were there with their two little girls They had a good dug-out and judged they were safe enough Anything, they thought, was better than family separation They knew what the cost of that had been to others

We boarded our train at 2 p m and, under a wet and cloudy sky, had reached the terminus at Luk'ou by six Then began the usual haggling over prices with baggage coolies and boatmen All that was settled in the end, as it always is We were in our tiny *hwa-tse*, as they call these flat-bottomed river-boats, by nine We lay on our *per-wos*, for there was no room to sit up under the low mat awning, whilst the solitary boatman rowed all night, and got us the thirty miles downstream to Siangt'an by 8 a m Twelve hours steady rowing looks like pretty hard going I guess he rested sometimes whilst we dozed, but we urged him on again whenever we were aware of this At one point he hesitated to go on He said that there were soldiers on the further bank We saw lights and heard shouts, but in the blackness of the night a little boat is a poor target

There was a shot or two, whether at us or not we did not stop to enquire as we noiselessly drifted on our way, and had no further interruption Arrived at Siangt'an, we made our way to a little Chinese launch and were soon ensconced in its cabin It wasn't much of a cabin really, but we were very comfortable after our all-night vigil We were soon moving merrily along, towing a

couple of large freight barges which impeded our progress somewhat. But we were no longer the victims of wind and current, as we proceeded under our own steam. On the bank above us was the long stretch of Siangt'an's houses with evidence of bombing here and there. I'm interested to-day to find I made this comment, writing my diary in the cabin of that little steam launch. "After sleeping a couple of nights as and where we might, lying down in our day-clothes just as we were, to be sitting in our crude but private cabin, shaved and washed and warmly fed, is luxury indeed. As I wander about in these much-bombed places, I marvel at the way life carries on. It's where fear prevails that there is the greatest disturbance. When fears become reality, then life seems to adjust itself and settle down. Perhaps also the fearful ones have passed to places where they can better endure." This was in China, November, 1939. How true it was of Britain from 1940 to 1945. That's the sort of remark I heard others make, any time, in London and the provinces when the day for Britain's testing had arrived. So suffering and bombing proved that Chinese and British, and perhaps all people that on earth do dwell, were very near akin. By 4 p.m. on that day, November 18th, we were in the emergency Methodist compound in Ch'angsha, having been delayed a good deal, not only by the towing, but by the searching of the Customs men and police enquiries when we tied up at the wharf. It had been a quite marvellous patch of journey. In fifty-three hours we had got to Ch'angsha from Lingling, had a meeting at Lenhsuit'an, and obtained passports at Hengyang. How grateful I was. After climbing up the bank of the river, we were about half an hour coming, in broken-down rickshaws, to the compound. The desolation of Ch'angsha reminded me of Pompeii or a town through which a tidal wave has swept. The people, of whom there were many, were living among the ruins, which were otherwise walled in with fallen bricks. The first view of Ch'angsha had been quite devastating. It certainly didn't seem to bear the aspect of resilience which is so characteristic of the Chinese.

How thoroughly depressed I was.

This is what had happened, as far as I could gather the story from friends who'd been through the experience. Soon after the capture of Hankow by the Japanese in 1938, it was feared that the enemy would advance into Hunan and put its cities and people in peril. We've heard so much of "scorched earth" policy in

Europe that it's probably forgotten, if it was ever known, that it was in China that "scorched earth" began "We cannot resist the Japanese except for a little while," they said "We shall have to retire, but when we go we'll leave the enemy with nothing but a desert Our houses will be empty shells, our fields will be devoid of crops, our streets and cities will be ruins We'll defeat the Japanese as the Russians defeated Napoleon "

It was Chinese who said this, not Westerners—modern Chinese, with their knowledge of European history In 1937 and 1938 the policy was, more or less, generally followed Then came Hunan's turn, that rich rice-bowl of China, and Ch'angsha, its magnificent capital Ch'angsha was not only a strategical centre it was a city full of priceless loot The Japanese shall never take Ch'angsha, they said The most they shall ever get will be a dead and ruined city So the soldiers placed tins of petrol and barrels of oil in chosen places all over the town, that, when the time came to burn, there should be a complete and utter conflagration Those who lived there never imagined a city of 350,000 "mouths" could be destroyed without direct orders from the High Command It was far too terrible a thing to contemplate, except out of dire necessity The warning would surely be given Besides the closed-in alley-ways from which escape has always been difficult, there were hospitals full of wounded soldiers The threat drew near Rumours of the firing of the city were rife Doubtless, many of the timid had already fled to their country homes There was apprehension, but nothing more, and the citizens went to their beds as usual Two friends of mine, a man and a woman missionary, lay down to sleep that night in the city just like their neighbours The woman, Miss S, woke next morning about 4 a m and, noticing the sky was unusually bright, went on to the verandah To her horror, she found that compound in the midst of a sea of flames Almost all the city seemed to be ablaze She woke her fellow missionary They had no more than time to gather up a bag of things and, with their Chinese friends, make their way through the one gap left in the flames Ten minutes later they wouldn't have been able to escape Similar experiences were being shared by all the foreigners in the city and by great sections of the Chinese populace No one knows how many perished that night or on the following day Some of the victims were wounded soldiers who had no strength to crawl to safety It was an appalling calamity hard to exaggerate, as if China hadn't suffered enough

without this self-inflicted injury. I'd heard of the devastation, but you had to see it to believe it.

They told me how Chiang Kai-shek arrived almost immediately, how he executed the responsible officials, high placed though they were, and how he asked the missionaries and other foreigners to meet him. When they came, they found a cool, calm, self-controlled personality who, in the midst of all that and so much more, carried himself serene. He thanked them for their help to China and for their succour to the city in its need, and then went as quickly and unostentatiously as he'd come. Yet, terrible as the destruction was, I felt then, as I cannot but feel now, that something was won at the awful price. The Japanese did not advance. There was nothing there to capture except one vast ruin. In spite of three or four incursions in the following years, they never took Ch'angsha, to hold it, till June 18th, 1944, when they advanced to seize the province rather than its capital.

As I entered and crossed the city that cloudy and wet November day in 1939 and threaded my way through its ruined streets, remembering the former glories, I was thoroughly overwhelmed with the self-inflicted tragedy. This city against which the T'aiping rebels had striven in vain lay slain with her own hands. One of the most imposing of all Ch'angsha's buildings was the Hunan Bible Institute, the gift of some wealthy American of Los Angeles. It had been Communist headquarters for a time in 1930, when the Communists held the city for a few days. Later in 1944 it became the Japanese headquarters. It was still in the hands of missionaries when I arrived in 1939 and was Refuge Centre No 1. Next door was the Union Theological School. One of its buildings had become our church headquarters for, within the city, our church and, I think, every other church had gone up in the flames. We knocked at the door, and found that Miss S. was in the city carrying on in the concrete basement of the burned-out church. We told the cook we'd come, had the cloth laid, the kettle boiled and the table spread and ready ere his mistress returned. "Sit down and have some tea," we invited her when she came in. "You're a famous woman," said I. "When you return to England they'll crowd to hear you. Everyone is reading *China Post*."

"Oh," she said. "Yes, I'm sorry. Those were home letters and never meant for publication. When I received the wire asking permission to publish, I'd forgotten what was in them. Had I

realised, there'd have been something of Miss G and Mr S and the others ”

“Then you mean that your little book of letters is a window into everybody's life in Ch'angsha during this period of war, of refugees and of distress and terror?”

“Yes,” she said “It's anybody's and everybody's window I'm sorry that it looks as if it were all my doing ”

With all my reading of books from China in recent years, that little collection of unstudied, unself-conscious letters remains to my mind the book of the period in its poignancy, simplicity and vividness She told me then and afterwards other stories of wounded soldiers with weeks-old, unattended wounds, of what untrained people like herself had done to try and help amidst the stench and sorrow, of poor lads clinging to her as their wounds were probed and dressed, crying, “Sing to us”, of her attempts to sing to help them as the tears were pouring down her cheeks I think if any critical Chinese or foreigner had sat where I sat and listened to her story, he'd never have said a word against a missionary again I know such things have sunk deep into many a grateful soldier's heart, and I thought I saw the harvest beginning to be I stayed ten days in the city, and I want to linger at this point in our story as I lingered then

## CHINESE AND FOREIGN FELLOW SUFFERERS

WEEKS previous to my reaching Ch'angsha, when I was still in Yunnan, I'd received a wire from B, then in Ch'angsha, saying that some of his colleagues had left the city in view of its imminent capture by the Japanese, and bidding me goodbye, as he should stay and feared we shouldn't meet. When I arrived, I found that this local invasion was an intriguing matter of argument and dispute. On the one hand, I was told of Chinese on the nearby hills watching Japanese cavalry advancing along the country paths to the city, and I met a preacher whose town had been overrun and destroyed. Yet some of the missionaries in 1939 were quite sceptical about the whole business. It was agreed that the city had been entirely evacuated by the Chinese military, in view of the approaching threat, and that the only people who remained were the very poor and the missionaries, who turned their compounds into places of refuge. But Ch'angsha hadn't fallen, and whatever threat had come had rapidly melted away like mist before the sun. Some said there had been real danger, others said that it was just unnecessary panic. So what was I to believe? A few pages on the story is told of how I made my way overland through the Kwangtung Province to Hong Kong, how I went from there to Shanghai, and on to Shanhakwan, Tientsin and Peiping, and at length travelled from Shanghai up the Yangtse to Hankow, which I reached on February 21st, 1940. There I met a missionary friend from the Japanese side of the line. He'd been at the point on the Yangtse from which this invasion of Hunan began. He'd seen the Japanese set off in high spirits and only a fraction of them return. Exactly what had happened he didn't know, but he was on friendly terms with the Japanese officer who was punished for the disaster, and gave me his name. This man said it was not his fault, but someone had to be the scapegoat. The higher officer, whose fault it was, had placed the blame on him. He was to be degraded and dismissed and ruined for life, he told my friend, and he wept as he told of his misfortune. This all seems conclusive enough. There's plenty of evidence from 1938 onwards that the Japanese were frequently making these rapid thrusts, few of which achieved anything. The

Chinese Government troops seemed to have the technique for dealing with such attempts, which were generally disastrous to the attackers, and this over several years. This whole episode is worthy of record, partly because it shows how little the non-military man on the spot knows of the actual fighting. Partly also because here is plain refutation of the curious claim that it was the Communist troops in the north-west that were doing all the fighting in these years and that the Government troops were inactive. Facts are facts, but had I not been both in Ch'angsha and Hankow I should never have known these facts. This double view was as revealing as it was unique.

China is a vast country, and the resident there is always warning himself against the perils of generalising his own, necessarily, local experiences. Perhaps this little incident is valuable for that reason. It isn't necessary to impugn men's motives, but I've read with wonder certain modern books about China that are regarded as classical and widely quoted as history. Some things in them could never have been written had their distinguished authors seen, shall we say, "both sides of the line." How could I possibly have known the facts of this considerable Japanese defeat by Government troops if I hadn't personally verified in Hankow what was a matter of some conflict of opinion in Ch'angsha?

In Ch'angsha I rested for a while, read and talked. We made a tour of the stricken city and especially of our premises on the West Street. The houses had been entirely demolished, but the church could evidently be re-roofed and used again. Somehow, the tour was more en-heartening than my first glimpse of Ch'angsha. The streets were cleaned up and the people bravely carrying on.

This idea of sweeping and cleaning the ruined streets was Chiang Kai-shek's. How often I thought of that in the cleaned-up ruins of London afterwards. It was in China that I saw these things first.

I preached to the little chapel full of Chinese on the Sunday morning. Only about 20 per cent were our own folk. The other 80 per cent were poor neighbours who'd come and gone previously, not over-impressed with the simplicity of the foreign religion compared with the colour and the clangour of their temple worship, but greatly impressed with what had happened now. As refugees poured through the town, the Church had succoured them. In their own peril and fear, the Church had faced the risks and stood by them, opening refugee camps for their

needs The "Hao-hua"—the "good words" the Church had preached—had become "Hao-shih"—"good deeds" That's the proof of all doctrine in China So our neighbours at last were crowding our doors and there was danger of us being thought a mere "mercy club" So the local leaders were gathering these recruits into groups and classes that they might teach them of the Source of all the mercy It was better for many to go away, as in fact they did, than to have swollen numbers who knew no other thing than gratitude to a few doers of "good deeds."

When I was detained at Huanghsien (pp 110 ff) my friends all over the province were doing what they could to help On November 19th I noted "An official delaying answer has come to the Ch'angsha request that I might be allowed to enter the province from Huanghsien and visit Ch'angsha and P'ingkiang As I've already been in the province more than two weeks and have got to Ch'angsha on two other permits freely given, this official answer appears to be too late to be negative"

It's nice having lots of friends, for where one failed another had succeeded. But aren't civil services the world over alike in their rapidity of motion? After all, "civil services" were China's gift to the world, you know. In the afternoon I preached in English to German, American, Norwegian, Jew, Yale and British missionaries The war, so far, had made no international cleavage in this China, neutral then as far as the European war was concerned Looking back, it seems strange that two parallel wars, in the East and West, should have been raging about the identical issue of aggression, and should have maintained themselves in isolation. Eventually, Japan altered all that

Next day, we'd a full house for the Welcome Meeting, which was very hearty and pleasant It wasn't easy to believe that my mere presence could do any good It's such a funny "presence" They sent back by me to England a few Chinese characters embroidered on silk, which seem to imply, "The stream is the proof of the source"—a delicate way of thanking the Missionary Society for this proof of its reality and kindness

On November 22nd I was writing "It is disappointing and a little humiliating to have to climb down from that on which one had set one's mind"

There'd been a great deal of difficulty about securing a pass to P'ingkiang and Liuyang, and the weather had turned very bad I'd wanted particularly to reach P'ingkiang, for our house there

had been destroyed by Japanese air bombing, and one of our men, Rev Albert Leigh, had been killed

Only a week or two before I reached Ch'angsha, P'ingkiang had been overrun by the Japanese for four or five days. They had retired, and there was every reason to go on, but after a good deal of uncertainty I decided not to take the P'ingkiang-Liuyang journey, but to get C and F and a few Chinese from Yiyang and Siangyin to come in instead. It spared me six days very hard travel over bad roads in worse weather. On the other hand, it left me without personal first-hand acquaintance with these northern and most troubled areas. There were compensations, as the sequel shows.

Later in the day we went to a feast at the house of a Mr Ch'eng. He was an office-holder in the Church, and in private life owned a "bath-house." These are to be found in all considerable cities in China. People can go for a real bath instead of a meagre 2 inches of hot water in a small round, wooden, varnished, 6-inch-deep tub at home. He was a most interesting man. He'd been a Boxer soldier in 1900, had later risen to the rank of brigadier, and finally left the Army for the washing of his fellow men. It must have been a lucrative business, for he was the proud possessor of a little petrol launch. This he wanted to loan to the missionaries so that it might sail under the, at that time, neutral British flag. When he was told that we couldn't play that Chinese game, he gave us it outright. Doubtless, if it had still been there, he'd have had it back as a gift at the end of the war. In the event, the British flag was no advantage to it. But how was anyone to know that then? He talked most interestingly of his life in the Army, and I talked of the way of a plane through the clouds. You never know when you're going to meet an interesting man like this in China to-day. Happily, he's reported to be still flourishing in 1946.

The delay had its compensations in the knowledge gained through conversations with Miss S and Mr B. The latter could never drag himself past a case of distress in the street, and the experiences grave and gay through which the former had passed made you wonder how much human nature can endure. She had just found a new refugee camp of 700 Hupeh folk. The refugee problem was sad beyond words. Would it or would it not have been better just to scatter in the day of battle and creep back again after the conflict? Surely this trekking of homeless folk is one of the most heartrending things in man's terrible history.

"Burnt-out Ch'angsha has certainly thwarted the invaders and denied them the spoils of victory Isn't that the proof that this suffering is not without its use?"

On November 24th we visited the river gunboat, H M S *Sandpiper*, which rescued and adopted a little Chinese baby from the water after a bomb raid The font was the ship's bell The godmother was Madame Chiang Kai-shek The minister was our Mr S , and Miss S and others were present on board The baby died later of pneumonia in Linglung We had a talk and a meal with Commander Nicholls and his bearded officers He was acting as British Consul, and was very helpful

Many men took to beards in this period, partly through the coast blockade and the difficulty of getting razors The Chinese believed that, by growing beards, foreigners were trying to make themselves look old and avoid being called up Happily, most of the beard-growers were entirely ignorant of Chinese and thus unaware of their cowardice When we returned F and C had just arrived from P'ingkiang, looking very fit, having been on the road two days They'd left their beards behind them, which was rather a disappointment to me After spending the day with beards, on the gunboat and ashore, I judged that beards greatly improve the faces of some What yarns we had together They had been two Englishmen, alone, in the face of invading Japanese in P'ingkiang They'd insisted on maintaining the inviolability of their compound refuge against all aggressive Japanese soldiers They'd wondered how long they could stick it and survive and then, as suddenly as they'd come, the invaders retired Our friends had been subsequently the invited guests of General Yang Sen, who had his army in the hills around the city There they'd sat with the General watching a play which was part education and part enjoyment for the troops This is typical of the doings in the Nationalist and Communist armies in China They'd come over an appalling road, destroyed but for a single foot-track so as to hinder the armour and the tanks of the Japanese The rain and storm had added to the chaos, but they were in great health and spirits At night we were all the welcome guests of an American host What a contrast for them—invasion, fighting, terror, strain, then mud, slush, rain, tired bodies, and now happy fellowship round the roaring fire of a generous American host Believe me, there's still plenty of adventure in being a missionary, but the good man himself is generally too busy to talk about it

Sunday, November 26th, was spent in ministering to still other refugee congregations Practically every church in Ch'angsha had been destroyed, and we all worshipped in makeshift places

How can I ever forget the two days we spent with Chinese leaders from Ch'angsha, P'ingkiang, Siangyin, Yiyang and Liuyang—all country towns of North Hunan Siangyin was utterly destroyed and the Chinese minister, such an insignificant little man, had fixed up a lean-to shed, where he lived exposed to the weather day and night, to be handy for any country member who might come Yiyang had just been subject to a terrific air raid Some of them had been living with groups of refugees among the hills Everyone had his or her story of bombing terrors, flights, deliverances We crouched round two charcoal braziers to keep our bodies warm Our hearts were warm enough as we shared each other's troubles and planned for the future They'd all suffered They lived among the sufferers They were going back to suffer They seemed to take it all for granted, knowing that, in the end, all would come right That faith was all but universal among the Chinese wherever I wandered We closed that meeting with Newman's great travel hymn, "Lead, kindly Light," as dear to the Chinese as to the British, and never more appropriate than among those suffering leaders

Another afternoon was spent in a wider group, representing all Christians in the city Missionaries waited on their Chinese friends with tea and cakes, and then we set to to discover what was happening in this hour of tribulation I was reminded a good deal of the spread of the persecuted Church in the Acts of the Apostles I probed this matter which they just took for granted without seeing its meaning There was so much truth and life about them all that they never thought of anything but fresh life and truth breaking out somewhere So they talked and answered questions, and so I listened

They told of strange and wonderful deliverances that filled the narrators with amazement I asked if they could do with fewer missionaries now When they realised that it was not just a weird foreigner's conundrum, they were most emphatic that neither life nor death nor any other creature should keep us from coming to the help of the tortured Chinese Church and people Through and in all our talk there was a note of strong confidence and hope

When we said goodbye to them, we foreigners sang around the fire at night "F as tenor and I as bass and the others leading us

along. There's nothing quite like unaccompanied singing when you have the voices for it S is from the Rhondda Valley, B from Cardiff and Miss S. from Leeds. So there you are"

It had been a great three days, a real holiday for the Chinese, who loved to be swapping experiences, for these were scattered days, and here they were together again for a little time. I'd missed the North Hunan trip, but this had been better after all for my purposes

"We're all disturbed with this sowing of the North Sea with magnetic mines President Roosevelt thinks the war will be over in the spring. I wonder why Burma is to have Dominion status"

So those were the headlines of the Ch'angsha news at the end of November, 1939. It's strange reading now.

On November 28th at midday we watched F and C. striding off into the rain and mud for P'ingkiang. It made me think of Oates stepping out into the snow on Scott's fatal but glorious expedition to the South Pole. It was a dismal enough outlook, but their faces were "set" and it would be better as they strode along than it looked. C had been in the house at P'ingkiang with Albert Leigh when the Japanese bombed it, but had managed to crawl out unhurt. Then, in the evening, we too turned our backs on Ch'angsha and set out once more through the ruins to the riverside. There, happily, we found our launch had hoisted a mast, but other things were not so happy. The Chinese mechanic, having received his month's wages, had got into an unholy fracas. He said he'd been beaten and lost his money, but that this riverside was a *k'o wu tih ti-fang*—"hateful place". He had also failed to procure any petrol and, as we now surmise, had failed to overhaul his engine. B went off for petrol, with which he arrived back at midnight. We then lay down and hoped to be many miles upriver by breakfast, but this is my diary entry, made at breakfast-time.

"We started this morning at 3.30 in bright moonlight and now, five hours later, find ourselves only fifteen miles along on a sixty-mile upstream journey. The wind, which helped us at first, is very slight now. Every once and again the engine gets a move on, but, like the mechanic, it gets tired, and just fizzles out most of the time. So, *sans* wind *sans* engine and *sans* movement, we are not likely to make much headway unless the mechanic mends that engine or we get a tow from a passing launch. '*Mu shih tsai ren, ch'eng shih tsai t'ien*' ('Plans are men's affairs, completion is

heaven's affair'), says the Chinese proverb The engine has just started again and we move "

That same day, November 29th, at 2 p m , I was writing "We've had a rather dreadful experience At least, B has Once the engine got started we travelled along merrily until, trying to approach the river bank, we grounded on a sandbank The engine stopped dead and we were reduced to our sail in a lessening wind We hailed a big junk, with a big sail and no cargo, and got them to give us a tow B was sitting on the deck reading, and I on the little companion-way, when another sailing junk collided with us. B called out, 'I'm afraid the mast is going ' It was tearing and straining badly. I heard a splash and saw the mechanic in the stern nearly go into the river himself in his vain attempt, as I thought, to grab the mast Our 'boy,' however, at the wheel thought differently 'It's Mr B,' he said As we scrambled on deck, we saw B being pulled on board another junk some hundred yards behind We fell back to take him on board, collided again, and this time our mast was broken and carried away B was drenched and shivering He'd been in deep water, but can swim. 'I've never swum before with all my clothes on, and heavy boots and mackintosh besides ' Happily, he had a complete change on board and that, with hot coffee and a charcoal fire, seemed to warm him up all right Since then all his clothes have been dried, and we've had a hot Chinese meal, and you'd never know what had happened except for a mast stump and the fact that our tow-boat is tied up alongside and we're helping one another Our engine has started up again now and there's a seven-mile wind filling up our tow boat's sails So, with the help of petrol and sail, we've passed beyond Siangt'an and are making for Chuchow, Luk'ou, and the Canton Railway We're very late and it looks like a long stretch in the dark if we're to catch the train to-night Our helpful tow-junk will pilot us Our mechanic is quite ignorant of this stretch of the river, which is said to be mined It was a serious accident and is a great deliverance and we are very thankful How different it might have been But who could have dreamed in these days of peril and stress, which so often fill our minds, danger and deliverance would have come in such a sudden and unexpected way?"

We reached Luk'ou at midnight and, after walking along the railway for a mile, got to the station and found we were in time for the train Our Chinese boy, who wasn't a Christian, said "Sie

*sie Shang-ti*"—"Thank God" Well he might, for the river journey had been unexpectedly slow, and we thought we should not catch the train We had a good night's rest, and next morning the military police were inquisitive again, but we gave them our cards and showed them our passports They went off, we hoped, to do something more useful for their country's good than to worry us Visiting cards were as useful on that journey, and generally are in China, as identity cards in England "We've had a good shave and wash and now are hoping for a warm Chinese meal from the restaurant car This is so much better than picnicking, with sausage rolls, on a cold and frosty morning, for it's very cold to-day" So ended November, 1939, and my journey through Hunan, and this is the comment that I made that day In spite of the Nanking atrocities and the nameless horrors of Belsen and Buchenwald, I let it stand to-day For there are other mysteries in the world than the mystery of iniquity

"In the five weeks I've been in the province every city I have entered shows signs of being bombed Some have experienced very severe bombings Yet, though I've often heard and been in the midst of 'alarms' and 'urgent alarms,' I have only seen two planes altogether, and have had no experience of bombing at all Does it mean just 'the good hand of my God upon me for good,' or is it that, anyhow, there are limits to the devilry and destruction of this sort of thing? That you can't bomb a bombed city for ever and go on breaking broken spirits past a point?"

I've lived in London through all the blitz and flying bombs and rockets since then, but this diary entry of November 30th, as so much else that happened to me on this journey, remains a proof of what I was feeling then Confucius refused to speak of strange and marvellous things My mind can never quite throw them off Can yours?

## XII

### BY KWANGTUNG'S RIVERS TO THE EASTERN OCEAN

So, on the stretch of still intact railway, we passed from Hunan into the Province of Kwangtung, arriving at the Kukong Station at 10 p m , a good day's journey After a brief stay in this "free" city, the headquarters of the Provincial Government, I was to make my way to the coast and Hong Kong by a route that was kept open through the Japanese-invaded area Rarely had it been possible for the invaders to keep all such roads closed Chinese have been wayfarers and smugglers for many centuries, and were not to be worsted in this matter by the Japanese

We reached Kukong late enough, and, what with luggage and things, didn't sit down to supper of pork chops and other luxuries till after midnight However, we didn't disturb one another that night, and slept the sleep of the just Next morning I went to the church and Institute in the city The latter building was housing the Wounded Soldiers' Welfare Association and the Workers' Co-Operative Organisation, under the ægis of the Y M C A I was surprised to see the city so little damaged after repeated bombings Apart from the aerodrome and aeroplane factory, legitimate objects of attack, I saw nothing to compare with the dreadful destruction in Hunan

We were now in an area where three languages were spoken There were the Hakka of the hills and villages These people, with their curious parasol-like head-gear, we met in large numbers later, on our way to the coast The coolie hats which they wore were fringed around with 3 inches of hanging cloth *Hakka* means "guests" or "strangers," and they looked to me to be superior tribesmen Of tribesmen, the Chinese mountains appear to be full Then there were large numbers, larger than ever, of Mandarin-speaking immigrants and refugees The prevailing group, of course, were Cantonese, with their strangely different speech and independence of control and character The three great revolutions of the last century all originated in Canton To try to talk to them in what they called Mandarin was most difficult The common Chinese saying runs

<i>T'ien puh p'a</i>	<i>Heaven, don't fear</i>
<i>Ti puh p'a</i>	<i>Earth, don't fear,</i>
<i>Chi p'a Kuang-tung ren</i>	<i>Only fear Canton men</i>
<i>Hsueh Kwan Hua</i>	<i>Speaking Mandarin (in your ear).</i>

In other words, there's nothing in heaven or earth as dreadful as a Cantonese-speaking the Mandarin language.

Kukong I found to be full of Government people, together with immigrants and refugees of all kinds and conditions. It had become an immensely wealthy and cosmopolitan city. I was piloted round the hospital, and found every nook and cranny filled with 120 in-patients, with four doctors and thirty Chinese nurses at work.

Financially, the hospital had never flourished as it did just then, and had accumulated funds for needed repairs, additions, and reconstructions, but hesitated to use them for fear of bombings. By making Dives pay for Lazarus, their accounts flourished, so that they were able to instal X-ray and light-therapy in those days. Actually, right up to the winter of 1944, Kukong continued to flourish, and all the work with it. Then the Japanese captured the railway from Luk'ou to Kukong and with it the city Government and hospital had to scatter for a little time.

The weather I found to be just then as cold as in Ch'angsha. This was unexpected to me in early December. We even had a fire. The news we heard was of Russia's attack on Finland. So apparently the Russo-German slogan was "Back to the pre-Versailles world." Yet that was the world that burst into flames. "Only, then, Russia was against Germany; and now she's for Russia and the world revolution." There seems to me to-day a certain value in letting these 1939 reflections stand. Only so may we see the road by which the world has travelled.

December 2nd turned out to be a perfect day in almost perfect scenery. In the afternoon I climbed to the top of the nearest hill and viewed the landscape o'er, including the "twisted river," which is the meaning of Kukong, the railway and its bridges, the airfield and the everlasting hills on every side. Over tea we discussed "occupied" and "unoccupied" China, air raids, separated families, and whether Chinese Christian leaders should stay or go if the Japanese advanced. I found, upon these travels, that it was nearly always true that chance conversation was more illuminating than the discussion of a set programme. There was no equal

way of gaining the frank and free expression of the mind of thoughtful people There were other folk to see as well

This is my note of December 3rd "Have just been to see an old (Middle School) student, Wu Tao Hua, in hospital with T B He recognised me, but I'd forgotten him, and asked after his old teachers This was truly characteristic of China Since leaving Wesley Middle School, he had been to Soochow and Shanghai for study, and then joined the Soldiers' Welfare Association He'd been working at the front carrying and tending wounded soldiers, and has broken under the strain He seems very happy and bright and sure that, in the end, the Japanese will go It took him about three months to learn Cantonese, he said So, at least, one Wesley student has made good" Often, in my wanderings, I wondered if Chinese students, under Government policy, weren't having too soft a time They've suffered a lot since, and in 1944-45 the Government appealed for student volunteers to join the Army!

That day was Sunday, and "the chapel was full with a good congregation Among them, first-class dress appeared to be a foreign suit, second-class the two-piece Sun Yat-sen uniform, without a collar or tie, and third-class dress ordinary Chinese clothes This is rather strikingly different from Yunnan and Hunan where clothing is more traditional I wonder what I shall find elsewhere J tells me that only 20 per cent of his congregation are his own folk The rest are strangers This seems to be quite common in 'unoccupied' China in these days of wandering The 'Mandarin' service was quite full to-night, but I've no notion how many were Mandarin-speaking and how many had just come to 'Look-see' From Kukong up to the Hunanese border, there is a large influx of Mandarin-speaking Hunanese, and all the hills are filled with Hakkas It was a Hakka minister who led the service this morning"

It was to Kukong that the British and other refugees escaped from Hong Kong in the spring of 1942 There some of them lie buried, and most were in no doubt of their obligation to our doctors, nurses and other friends The one-legged Admiral Chan-chak obtained a much needed blood-transfusion from Perudur Jones, one of our missionaries So Welsh Methodist and Chinese blood are mingled in the veins of a man later baptised by Bishop Hall of Hong Kong Admiral Chan became Canton's Mayor in 1946.

The next day we left Kukong at four in the afternoon, after the

usual delays Mr. Van E, an American Presbyterian, turned out to be an excellent chauffeur and kept his Red Cross truck going right through the night till 4 a m. We stopped then for an hour till daylight, for we weren't sure of our way, and just dosed off were we sat—or tried to. We'd been delayed a little by taking a couple of Chinese nurses, long after dark, to a temple where they were to do public health work. Starting again at 5 a m. we were in Lung Chuan, 250 miles from Kukong, by 9 a m.—not such bad going for a night ride in China. It was safer to travel by night in these times, for the Japanese rarely flew at night.

At Lung Chuan we hired a boat and took to the river. A Chinese friend brought armfuls of pumeloes and insisted on putting them in the boat beside us. So we lay on our *pei-wos* or sat out on the tiny deck and read and sailed along on a calm stream, in perfect weather, under a heavenly sky, unbothered by military police or such interruptions, and wondering if we could be travelling in a country at war.

This way to Hong Kong had only been devised since the fall of Swatow, and it was never quite sure how much of it and for how long was likely to be open.

The pumeloes were sure, anyway. They are a larger sort of grape-fruit, as big as a melon, and they were a much appreciated fruit in China centuries before grape-fruit were ever heard of. They have the same grape-like flavour, but you eat them in "quarters" as the children eat oranges. We travelled through that day and through the night, our boatman or his wife rowing almost solidly for twenty-seven hours, till noon next day. Our only excitement was scraping along over a sand-bank in the shallow stream and being poled over into deep water again. At Hoyuen we changed into still shallower boats and this is what I wrote whilst nearing Waichow on the following day, the 7th:

"We are two 'little ships' now. One contains a Chinese Y M C A secretary, J and myself. When we're tucked up for the night, you could hardly get another living thing among us. The other carries two Chinese nurses and a Chinese W A A C. One is a Roman Catholic, one a Christian and the other, the W A A C, wants to be. She's been in the front line caring for wounded soldiers, is taking this difficult and possibly dangerous journey with us, but says her parents object to her being a Christian as yet. Such is life and such, incidentally, the insight of her parents." If the nomenclature offends, it may be added that *Tien-Chu-Chiao*

—"Heavenly Lord teaching"—is the common name for Roman Catholicism, and "*Chi-tu-chiao*"—"Christ teaching"—is the common name for Protestantism So I was merely translating, you see

In the darkness of the night, and among the sand-banks, we'd got separated and lost a good deal of time, but had come forty miles by daylight and had another forty miles to go before we reach Waichow This place had been in the hands of the Japanese once or twice, but they were said to be far enough away just then We passed through lovely country—trees, hills, mountains, water and a cloudless sky with cool wind and hot sun It was something of a picnic and a holiday, on a background of some uncertainty, and was very pleasant going I read Maurois *Disraeli* and a book by Wodehouse, which were lent me at Kukong Very different this last from the problems with which my life just then was faced and the troubles through which our friends were passing in this patient and unhappy land

Wodehouse, the fun doctor of his generation, was not to escape the agony of the times A victim of the German invasion of France in 1940, he came under criticism and suspicion of his more fortunate free brethren in Britain "To know all is," perhaps, "to forgive all" At any rate he was friend to me on that sunny deck, as he had often been before, and I'm telling the story of an Eastern journey, not of a Western war We reached Waichow at 7 p m at night It had been damaged a little There was nothing remarkable about it, though it was evidently a road and river junction of some importance

We wandered through the town after an excellent meal in a restaurant The shops seemed to be recovering from the disasters and the destruction, and to be doing a good trade in worthwhile articles

We remained on board our junk for the night There is a saying, "Snoring like a pig" A boatful of pigs was moored next to us for the night There was a general undertone of thunder, and when we woke in the morning the pigs were snoring like men You couldn't discover t'other from which, except that possibly the men's breathing was a little lighter J remarked that it was unnatural and unhealthy, for if a wild boar snored like that he would attract all the wild beasts of the mountain On the other hand, of course, he might scare them

In spite of the pigs, I'd four or five hours of the best sleep I'd known since leaving Kukong, and, with coolies and chairs duly

called, we were astir next day, December 8th, at 4 a.m., and on our way by six.

*December 8th, between Waichow and Tamsui.* "I'm sitting in a carrying-chair with its bamboo frame and long carrying-poles, by the roadside, some three and a half hours on our way. There's a good deal of traffic going and coming; but the new motor road is so cut and dug about that motor traffic of all sorts is quite impossible, though bicycles seem to manage pretty well in this dry autumn weather. Where they can't go, they can be carried. This country is very beautiful, with the bamboo the prevailing tree. I've never seen so many bamboos in any other part of China. There are many rice-fields, and sweet potatoes in large quantities. There are plenty of fir-trees, too. Altogether a strange assortment of hot- and cold-weather plants. From a cycling newsman, I bought the Chinese newspaper from Hong Kong of the day before. As far as I could make out, Sweden, that has remained neutral all through, was then on the edge of war, and the Chinese were attacking on all fronts. Well, well.

"It was just a day of pleasant country travel, walking and riding in an open chair, within a few miles of wars and rumours of war, but strangely peaceful ourselves."

We reached Tamsui about 5 p.m. over a bridge that had either been dynamited or bombed; and put up in a hotel on the very edge of a destroyed area of the city.

If they came again, we should be a first-rate target, but what was the good of worrying? At least there was a good wide bed after the congestion of the boat; and no pigs to sleep with. We'd only come thirty miles and had taken eleven hours. A malaria-stricken coolie had been the main cause of delay. We made preparations to be off before dawn next morning, for there was a launch to be caught at Shaoyüchung on the coast, by which we hoped to reach Kowloon that afternoon. Next morning we were off to Shaoyüchung.

Things didn't go quite as planned. The baggage coolies turned up all right, and were off with J. and the nurses by 3.30 a.m. The chair coolies, as usual, didn't arrive till fetched, and then one chair failed us at the city gates. Miss Kan, the Y.M.C.A. Secretary, and I were left with one chair between us. I remained in that, as I thought they'd better carry the heavy-weight whilst they would. We set off in a Scotch mist and, as we went along over a sandy waste in the dark, with storm lanterns showing here and

there, I remembered the wreckers and smugglers in the good old days in Devon and Cornwall, and my notorious old "ancestor," the Rob Roy of the West Was his impish spirit with me as we went through the damp, dark mist of the morning?

At the first stop I got Miss Kan in the chair. She was probably less than half my weight, and we raced along in fine style for four or five miles. After that I thought they'd better have another go at heavy-weight. That finally broke them up—or is it down? They were an opium-smoking trio and, after a mile or so, we left Miss Kan to their ambling leisure and set off to walk.

The last part of the journey was above a narrow river gully. An endless stream of coolies were coming in from the sea with tins of oil slung from their carrying-poles or motor wheels and the thousand and one necessities that had somehow to evade the blockaded coast. It was slow, of course—thirty or forty miles a day, but then it was unending. The traffic never stopped. I thought of this scene in 1941, when the Burma Road was closed. The motor road might be closed, but would not the long strings of coolies and mules still be moving up and down the Marco Polo Road, as they always had for centuries? Before I reached Shao-yüchung and the sea I suppose I put twenty miles beneath my feet and felt like it. The walk was hot, my clothes were heavy. But I arrived not much the worse for wear. It was lovely to see the sea again. I understood the shout of those ancient invaders of Greece as, after long toil, the sea burst into their view. There was a little Customs House, with an Englishman still in residence. He told me that they'd long ago ceased all attempts to control the smugglers or the smuggling. It was obviously to the advantage of China to get goods into the country, Customs or no Customs, and he was letting things rip. What else could he do? On the sandy shore were dumps of merchandise brought there by junks and steamers. The coolies tried to carry the stuff away before it could be bombed. The Japanese had bombed a heap of fireworks one day, and had been sure it was ammunition. "This sea-shore," he said, "is China. That water is the Hong Kong Bay, and British. No one can attack you there. The sooner you are on that launch the sooner you are safe." So, without undue delay, we took our bags and baggage and rowed to the little steamer and settled our things at the stern of the boat. There was a family of quite nice pigs lying down beside us, and, of course, quite a lot of passengers. Shao-yüchung was a little coastal port, and in December, 1939,

was one of the two or three remaining open doors into China, the others being the Burma, the Indo-China, and the Russian routes. The last seemed to be a very distant door. In 1941 and 1942 three of those doors were closed and the fourth became inoperative and yet, China being the country that it is, I've never been able to believe that every way was blocked, except by air. If the goods had been there, the Chinese would have got them in somehow. There was a constant stream of coolies both ways between Tam-sui and Shao Yu Chung. There must have been several thousands of them a day carrying the stuff from the coast to the first town or navigable river, where other coolies carried on. China couldn't beat Japan by manpower. "That's a silly fallacy. Your men have to be fighters and well led. Yet I think that China might beat Japan with this ceaseless army of workers. It's the man who rules the coolies that will govern China. Much of the scenery passed through near the coast was very lovely. That's nothing unusual, for China is a lovely country. The moment we got on the waves we were in Britain, and I didn't see how the Japanese could close this little door any more than they could close French Indo-China and Russia." This was my judgment written two years, of course, before the calamities of Pearl Harbour, Hong Kong and Singapore. It was true in its way. Who could foresee such troubles then?

The boat up-anchored and we rose to the ocean wave. The pigs didn't like that motion at all. The Chinese as a rule are not the best of sailors, and we weren't sorry, when, after an hour or two, we were in the calm waters of Kowloon. So another stretch of the journey was ended.

"We've come 250 miles by truck, 140 miles by boat and 60 miles by road through country which the Japanese have 'held' for short spaces. Most of the cities and ports we've seen have been badly bombed. We've travelled by night, when there are said to be special dangers from brigands, and we've come through all in perfect peace. We've had our troubles and disappointments, our plans upset and then remade beyond our skill and dreaming. All that we've done has been to drive pretty hard day and night at a certain goal by a definite date. As B's coolie said at an earlier point, '*Sie-sie Shang-ti*'—'Thank God'."

"In five weeks in Yunnan, five more in Hunan and ten days in Kwangtung I've been spared the horrors of a personal experience of an air raid. Thus the wind has been tempered to

my need On the whole, perhaps, I've had enough experiences without

"Now the real physical hardships of this journey are mostly over The mental and spiritual hardships are to begin, I fear I pass from 'unoccupied' to 'occupied' China now "

Well, we're none of us much good as prophets, are we?

## A HAVEN OF PEACE IN A SEA OF TROUBLE

ONCE ashore we made our way to the Canton-Kowloon railway, a few miles of which ran through British territory. We must have looked dirty and unkempt as we boarded the train and called for cool drinks, after our parched and weary journey. By tea-time on December 10th we were being welcomed into the manse of the Union Church, where missionary families had been evacuated. What heaven it was to be cared for by English women again, and to meet those doughty Yorkshiresmen and the vigorous Chaplain, and have a good batch of home letters. What joy it was to have a full-length bath and a Christian meal, and talk and discuss till we could once more see life on the background of the whole wide world. It was a rapid change over from vagabond to cherished guest. How much our friends up-country were denied. It was only then that one realised how many necessities one had managed to do without. I thought I was tired when I got in, but it was sheer rest to sit and plan and talk till midnight and beyond. Truly the Chinese proverb is undeniable "*Hsin wei sheng chih chu*" — "The mind is the lord of the body."

Early next morning we crossed by the harbour ferry to Hong Kong. As I write now, in 1946, Hong Kong, however beautiful, is known as a place of tragedy. There, in 1941, occurred terrible atrocities. There many dear friends interned for more than three years had awaited deliverance. Yet, this is how I felt then.

"How peaceful Hong Kong appears to be, and how orderly, after both war-torn and unoccupied China. I was early at the English service at Wanchai conducted by Eric Moreton." Moreton lost his life on Christmas Day, 1941, whilst driving a Red Cross lorry during the Japanese attack on the island, leaving a young widow and a tiny baby. From there I went straight to the Chinese service in the famous Chinese Methodist Church. The building was full with some 750 quiet, reverent Chinese worshippers. We had an orderly service with surpliced choir, printed order and good, hearty singing. I'd seen nothing like it in China anywhere in thirty-two years before. I delivered the address in Mandarin and was, evidently, interestingly translated into Cantonese. Visitors to Hong Kong should all be shown this church as well.

as one of the best Soldiers' and Sailors' Homes in the world. We went from there to the manse, completely looted since, overhanging the Happy Valley, with its burial ground and its natural amphitheatre, that overlooks the racecourse and recreation ground. In 1941 this Valley became a battlefield. In the evening I talked in the Wanchai Church to forty or fifty Britons of this journey of mine and finished up with a sing-song at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home. A soldier of the new Army there, out of Bideford, called Rattenbury, wanted to know if he was any relation of mine. This Soldiers' and Sailors' Home could take in, at a pinch, no fewer than 200 men for the night. The restaurant and all else was splendidly run. Before the war, the Home's technical classes had 300 men enrolled. I told S., the Chaplain, that when he got kicked out of the ministry he'd be able to get a job as a hotel-keeper. He and his wife, like so many others, were interned in 1941 at that lovely Stanley Point, round which, and all the other blue-water bays and green grassy slopes of one of the loveliest spots in all the earth, we motored and roamed then as we had opportunity. For Hong Kong was a haven of refuge and rest in a very ocean of trouble. No ordinary man believed, whatever might betide, that Hong Kong could be snatched from us. I saw camps of Chinese refugees. I saw Missionary and other families sheltering too from their inland stations. Lovely, peaceful Hong Kong was impregnable. Look at the mined harbour, we thought, the fortified hillsides, the lately arrived Bengali regiment encamped in the Kowloon Barracks. China, of course, must suffer. She always suffered, but Hong Kong stood, and would for ever stand. Besieged she might be, but taken, never. What a haven of peace and safety. At the end of the second day of visiting and sightseeing, as I got on board a Butterfield's boat that was to take me to Canton, I noted "These two days have, I suppose, been sufficiently full, but the absence of 'alarms' and the quiet confidence and order of this little world that hasn't lost its bottom is in itself a rest to the sort of pilgrim that I've become. We shall be on the river all day to-morrow, and so I set out again." That was in 1940. In 1946 we've been trying Japanese Commandants for their injustices in Stanley Point and other war prisons.

On December 12th we reached Shameen after a pleasant and peaceful trip. Besides the Chinese, there were Japanese, Indian, American and British passengers. At Whampoa, Canton's port, we took on board a Japanese naval pilot, all complete with

cutlass There were signs of destruction both in and alongside the river. When we tied up, Japanese military and Customs folk took charge of boat and passengers alike We'd to show our passports three times, and all our goods and chattels were subject to careful search I presume the gendarme who ran his hands over me was looking for arms It was all polite and inoffensive, but one had need for patience It was nothing to the patience they required at Stanley Point We remembered that we were only from twenty to forty miles from the front line Shameen looked much the same as ever, except that there was little non-Japanese business being done It seemed a less bitter situation down here, where there was complete defeat, than in Hunan, where the conflict was still strenuous and determined. The Chinese looked and must have felt very glum at this loss of liberty that was for the time "inevitable "

On December 13th, I noted. "These are unusual days An American R C Father is arranging a trip for me to see relief affairs in and around Canton 'Our money is running short,' said he 'But if God sends us the refugees He'll give us the money to feed them We needn't worry overmuch'"

That trip took us to our own church, where 180 refugees were just finishing their daily bowl of gruel, and to an R C refuge of 600 patients When panic came upon the city with the advance of the Japanese in 1938, local doctors and nurses had fled in panic and 500 wounded soldiers were found dead of neglect when Father Kennedy took over. We went through ruined and burnt-out areas, bad enough, but nothing after Ch'angsha We watched strapping, well-built, well-equipped Japanese troops coming in all day That such soldiers should have put up the fight they did in the Pacific cannot be surprising to those who'd known them in China

Our last visit that day was to the Lingnam University, Canton Christian College Its amazing, beautiful and efficient campus was derelict but for 1,400 refugees, to which the original 10,000 had now been quite rightly reduced The ingenuity and ability of the Chinese professor who showed us round was very marked

It is enlightening to look back at what I wrote that day of my general impressions "I'm impressed with the complete domination of this river and this Canton city by the Japanese There's not only a military and mercantile, but also a religious and even Christian invasion, such as can best be accounted for on the

assumption that the Japanese have come to stay I've spoken to no Chinese here so far who wasn't pessimistic about the political outlook They seemed to think that peace might come soon, on the basis of the ceding to Japan of North China, or even of some permanent control of all China" That was in 1939, remember

This state of mind would have been quite incredible to me if I hadn't moved in the midst of it For the Cantonese had shouted themselves hoarse for war with Japan when Chiang was hesitating three years before Perhaps I should have known "You don't fear the barking dog," the proverb runs It has to be remembered that the overthrow of Canton was sharp and unexpected "Treachery," many said It has also to be remembered that Wang Chinwei was a Cantonese He'd forsaken the Nationalists and had gone later to be puppet Governor of Nanking He is said to have died in a Japanese hospital in Tokyo in 1944 Many of his followers were acting then in the Canton Puppet Government It had also to be remembered that, at the most, there were only 800,000 of the 2 million inhabitants of Canton who were back again This was the highest estimate the Japanese claimed, and was probably much exaggerated Only those who were willing to submit had returned There were Japanese barriers across the streets, Japanese Navy men on the riverside, Japanese military in control, Japanese sentries and soldiers everywhere The Japanese press-gang were at work and in a most thoroughgoing manner, closing a street from end to end and then combing it for manpower Well, anyway, there it was "I knew I was to meet depressing things, but I didn't anticipate being plunged so soon and so fully into pessimistic gloom The general feeling is that the European war will have adverse effects on the China situation Everything is made to fit the picture But what will the rest of China think if the Jingoes of the south should get off free whilst north China is made the price of peace?" Never again on this journey was I to find anything quite so hopeless My foreign friends never seemed to have had any high opinion of the local politicians I'd expected more resilience

My aim was to reach Fatshan, a large town some twelve miles beyond Canton There we had hospital, schools, and the headquarters of our South China work Though the schools were evacuated to Hong Kong, the hospital was carrying on, and I particularly wanted to visit the area It wasn't possible to take the journey without a Japanese permit, and to the securing of this I

now set myself. Enquiries seemed to show that river, road and railway were all blocked by fighting with guerrillas. One couldn't be sure of this, for the military kept their own secrets. So I called at headquarters to interview the Japanese major in charge. An English-speaking lieutenant was a little brusque and negative. So I just told him we were on a very important mission, which required haste, and asked if we couldn't see his superior. I've always found it's the small fry who are uppish. They have to be, I suppose, in Japan as in China or Britain, or what would become of them? Well, we've all been small fry ourselves. His superior officer had less English, but more affability, and promised to do his best to get me on my way. So we bowed ourselves out in hope; but whether we put our trust in the smiles of the major or the scowls of the lieutenant, we couldn't be clear. Had I known what I discovered in Shanghai two months later, I should have been more hopeful. There I met a Methodist Bishop, an American responsible for the work in Korea, Japan and Shanghai, who, at a Chinese meal, unconsciously unlocked the secret. This same major he'd known in Japan, and had helped him out of a very awkward situation with an emergency loan of \$3,000. The officer had thrown his arms round his neck and hugged him and hadn't forgotten. So when another Methodist turned up wanting a favour, what was he to do but help the brother in distress? Human nature, after all, is pretty constant everywhere. In a day or two's time, we got the message that if we could wait till Tuesday, the 19th, and borrow a Red Cross car, he'd send the lieutenant with me for a twenty-four hours' trip to Fatshan, and he hoped the road would be clear by then.

So I just sat down to four more days' delay and tried not to waste one of the precious hours. Just to be with my friends there was rewarding in itself, especially as I look back, for every one of them was interned in 1941. Anyhow, we had a few peaceful days together then. These are some of the things I noted: "The things I see here are strangely similar to what I found here in 1926 at the time of the Revolution. There's the same suspicion of foreigners by the powers-that-be, Japanese and their puppets, this time. Destructive and constructive cartoons are on the walls here, now as then. I wonder if they're done by the same artists with the same ideas. It's as though the Japanese were doing the fighting, but the propaganda and its methods were in the hands of the puppet Chinese groups." This was how Shameen seemed to me then:

"I've been strolling through this little settlement with its consulates and palatial office-residences How busy and thriving it must once have been and what a history it's had How quiet and dull and dead it is now with its three rows of houses, its barbed wire and pillboxes and, just across the creek, the Japanese sentries "

All my China life I've had to do with R C priests At the close of the 1914-18 War a group of Irish lads, with their ruddy cheeks, came to live at Hanyang and to work in the Han Valley, where we worked I suppose they didn't think much of us, but one at least of our country hospitals often helped them in their distresses, and it was good to have our common English tongue for conversation Before that, the priests with whom we'd had to do had been Spanish, Italian and French and our general medium of communication had been the Chinese language Yet I never really saw so much of R C priests and their work as in this invaded and battered city of Canton "Father Cairns comes in to supper to-night, and in his vivacious presence I guess we'll forget the doldrums" He was an American, and in 1944 I received in England a Christmas card from him, sent from Sancien, the island off the coast of China where Francis Xavier died I hear that he was shot there later trying to escape from the invaders "He's Secretary of the Red Cross, which is serving 11,000 meals a day in twenty-eight centres The meal consists of one good basin of gruel It's supplementary to what people may otherwise secure It's all that many have" For nine years I've served on the Committee of the British Fund for the Relief of Distress in China, initiated by London's Lord Mayor in 1937, and later merged into Lady Cripps' British United Aid to China Having witnessed the suffering, and seen the need supplied, I've rejoiced that British hearts have, out of their own kindliness, given nearly £2,000,000 to faraway China "The crumbs from our table will do a lot of good here and, incidentally, all our hospitals I've visited in China have benefited in their drug and other supplies from the fund" We shall need to go on helping long after the close of the war

Canton and its suburbs house normally the huge population of 2 million people It was one of the first ports opened to foreign merchants and missionaries Commercially, it's very go-ahead Psychologically, I couldn't help but feel that it suffered from its proximity to the extremely British Hong Kong Somehow, Canton

seemed a long way behind the revolutionary independence of Central China. This was surprising when you considered the virility of the typical Cantonese, but I think Hong Kong is the reason.

I visited a hospital where the American doctor managed to fix a regular broadcast service from his dispensary to every ward in the place—in 1939, mind you. “Another hospital I’ve seen here distils its own alcohol from sweet potatoes. It then exchanges its surplus stocks of alcohol at the chemists for the drugs of which it’s in need. Needless to say, this is in a hospital run by an Irishman. I went to The Sun Yat-sen Medical School, where Dr Sun studied for one year. In the courtyard is a memorial stone to him. Through 1937–8, in spite of war, it was being rebuilt with the help of a Government grant. It continued all through the bombings, but, at the time of the Japanese occupation, the Chinese medical and nursing staff took refuge in unoccupied China. It still carries on with the help of missionary doctors and nurses.”

On December 18th the diary reads “Moving about the Canton streets, I’ve been impressed with the number of Japanese men and women about. I suppose the same ships that brought them can take them home again. But will they? To-day I saw an advertisement for the Japanese Y M C.A.” That certainly was new for China. One comment seems centuries away now. “According to the wireless, Hitler has ordered the *Graf Spee* to be scuttled and sunk five miles out of Montevideo. This saves a lot of needless suffering in an otherwise hopeless battle, and I suppose interns 1,200 good officers and men for the duration of the war.” How little I realised that six Christmases were still to pass before VE and VJ Days.

I wasn’t sure where Christmas, 1939, was to be spent. For the Japanese had suddenly closed the river. This was strange, for the Chinese war was still only an “incident,” they claimed. The American Navy had a gunboat moving between Canton and Hong Kong, and perhaps one might go Christmasing in that. At least, the Captain of the s.s. *Mindanao* had intimated that he would be “honored” with my presence as a traveller. So he spoke to others. He might be honoured. We were greatly relieved. But first we must see Fatshan. At midnight on the 19th I was writing

“All has gone well to-day. We were all, including the Japanese lieutenant, in the Red Cross car by 9 a.m. We’d a long delay at the ferry, and watched large quantities of rails and sleepers being

entrained for somewhere up the line and still more Japanese soldiers coming in ”

We pursued our way among the rice-fields over the plain on a roughish road, and had reached the compound by noon Our lieutenant went to join his comrades till noon the next day, which relieved us of the problem of what to do with him He told me on the way that he'd been in China three years and didn't seem at all clear he'd ever get home again Life was precarious and many got ambushed

What a time we had First a public reception in the chapel, where “ ‘a said what ‘a owt to ‘a said and coomed awa’ ” Then a private reception where we could talk quite frankly and one could learn what was really in their minds Then supper and a long evening with the missionaries, right up till midnight Later, all but one family of them were interned, but no one could rob us of the memory of that evening Next morning we spent rushing round and seeing everybody and everything Our great Haigh College and Wiseman Girls' School were refugeeing in Hong Kong Other schools were refugeeing in their premises, and other individuals too One of them, a preacher of another Church, told me quietly that he didn't see how the Japanese could win this war They were atrocious How often I heard that note, both in free and occupied China That Chinese confidence in the sanity of the universe is a thing to be reckoned with by the nations, and brings the Chinese and British very close together, I'm sure In this savage war it was buoying them up as it buoyed us up It's the larger part of the “big battalions” with which Napoleon said battles were won “It is our greatest asset,” said a great Chinese to me in 1944, “As long as we've this faith, we shall win ”

I woke next morning to the singing of birds in the trees of this many-acred school compound How gloriously beautiful China can be on a sunny spring or autumn morning Those who only know her ports or smell their way through her mediæval but changing cities little know of her surpassing beauty The “good earth” is the fair earth too After that I rushed from place to place and problem to problem, always in the company of these beloved friends, and then at 2 30 we were in the car and off to Canton again We were moving through guerrilla country, but the lieutenant was the nervous one, as, knowing what his countrymen had done, he'd need to be We were back within thirty hours of leaving Canton It seemed wicked to rush across the

world for those brief hours together. But necessity was upon me I must move quickly if I was to do my job The very intensity of it all made it memorable for them and to me After all, we don't count time "by figures on a dial" A message can be given in a very little time

Here in Canton, in our absence, the press-gang had been very busy, and the people were troubled and frightened One old man of seventy-two, known to our Chinese minister, was taken So the preacher went to the Police Station and said to the Japanese there, "Surely an old man of seventy-two is no use to you" After a little persuasion, they took him to a room where 150 "pressed" men were gathered The old man's name was called by the officers and he immediately responded "Do you know this gentleman?" the officer enquired. "Of course I do," he replied and he went on to tell of him They then set the old man free

The courage of that Chinese minister was considerable and his personal risk great

Imagine that scene in Austria or France or Holland or Belgium any time from 1939-45 and you'll agree I could match it again and again from things I learned in occupied China on this journey. The Chinese are said not to be conspicuous for bravery, but I've known many very brave indeed You can't rightly praise or condemn any nation in the mass

The next entry was from the U S A gunboat *ss Mindanao*, December 22nd

"The passengers have sought out sheltered spots of sunlight on this boat, and on the whole it's proving the best bit of travel since I left my aeroplane There's been a good bit of journeying by gunboats in the last two years You're charged for nothing but food, and the captain can take or leave you as he likes British gunboats, just now, are reduced to a minimum, and, anyhow, their position is equivocal, as belonging to a belligerent

"It's only this strange undeclared war, 'the China incident,' which makes our position tenable at all So this sort of carrying is left to the American Navy just now The Japanese have 'closed' the Pearl River, but the American Navy takes no notice Who's going to close anything to them, in view of the approaching abrogation of the commercial treaty? What right has a country not at war to close the river, anyhow?"

We've seen strange things in Europe since then

There were some dozen to a score of missionaries and others, all

the guests of the American Navy They'd have had to stay in Canton for Christmas but for this privilege

We had to get well out among the islands around Hong Kong as we approached our goal The British had mined the ordinary channels, and only permitted entrance by this roundabout route, and so we came once more to the haven of peace

Whether or not I could get on immediately to Shanghai, this was the end of the Canton visit, unique in some ways, but happily not unique in the kindness of the missionaries or the care of my friend, C We watched the P & O S S *Narkunda*, just out from Britain, leaving for Shanghai as we entered the port She had brought a number of my friends to China Some I met, that day and the next, and shared in the joys of the wedding of a bride whom the good ship had brought Other passengers I caught up later in their various stations There was little thought so long ago that Japan would ever dare to attack that haven of peace, and America's Pearl Harbour, too How blind wise moles can be.

A RUSSIAN CHESSMAN AND A BRITISH  
MERCHANT

THE S S *Narkunda* had gone, but the Italian Lloyd S S *Costellazzo* was said to be starting in two days' time. So once more my luck was in. I'd time to see many friends, some of whom had just landed, and to advise them of the routes I'd followed in and out to their stations. C and I took a motor-ride, up and down the island, conducted by W J Wilson, a fellow churchman and a science master in a Government school. It was all very very beautiful and reminded me a little of the islands of Pootoo, though nothing can be as beautiful as Pootoo itself, sacred to Kwan-Yin "the goddess of mercy," upon a summer's day. Wilson, like C, came safely through internment later. Each time I'd visited Hong Kong it had been more developed and more beautiful than the last. This trip was best of all; for it was most intimate. What a blasphemy that Hong Kong should have to become an internment camp, and yet what mercy and mitigation of the prisoners' lot, too, it must have been to be incarcerated there. By day, it was a dream of beauty in a blue sea, with the surrounding islands, like a land-locked lake. By night, the whole hillside was a glowing picture of lamps in the darkness. New York from the sea with its great sky-scrappers alight, was strangely akin. A barren pirates' lair has been turned, by British wealth and industry, into one of the greatest harbours in the world. A similar transformation was to be seen in Shanghai and other treaty ports. The "unequal treaties" were abrogated in 1943. Yet international commerce will and should go on. A great deal will depend on the delicacy and tact with which the problems of new China are handled from within and without. "What we have we hold," say some. "*Hoh ch'i fah ts'ai*," say the Chinese— "It's the pleasant man who grows rich." How the Hong Kong question is handled (for make no mistake, it is a question) may have much to do with the goodwill of Britain and China.

Such thoughts filled my mind as I rode around Kowloon, the "leased territory" of the mainland opposite Hong Kong. There I saw our Empire soldiers, the barracks and the fortifications. It all seemed strong, but the Japanese overran such defences and

defenders as we could provide, in a matter of days and hours. How little could we then realise Hong Kong's defencelessness against a determined and numerous foe

We went one evening to the Chinese church and saw the evacuated Wa Ying—"Wiseman Girls' School"—giving a Christmas concert. Besides the sweetest of singing, there was a very lovely Nativity play, all beautifully rendered by these modern Chinese schoolgirls. What a difference the West, and particularly the Church, has made to the lives of China's women, and all in the matter of a few years. How wonderfully musical the Chinese are you realise when they take to modern music. Their old falsetto singing and their pipes and gongs I like to hear afar off, as I do the Scottish bagpipes. But Chinese love all music—even that

The next day was full of visits and visitors, interrupted by packing for the next stage of the journey and by the cholera injection, without which I couldn't get a ticket for Shanghai. Hong Kong health restrictions were bad enough, but Japan had a mania for these things, as you shall hear. In Canton I'd seen their soldiers walking about with cotton masks over their noses and mouths. All very useful, I suppose, but I've never seen such things anywhere but among the Japanese.

C and I rounded off my last day, December 23rd, in Hong Kong by going to a Chinese cinema where *Lady Precious Stream* was being given. It wasn't the English edition. There were real Chinese artists and scenes and the sonorous Chinese speech of Peiping. The whole picture was excellent and excellently acted. There was a complete absence, of course, of all that luscious sucking and kissing which the West is erroneously thought to enjoy. Our film industry too often gives a grossly unseemly picture of Western life to the East. If Pearl Buck paints her Chinese as inescapably and extravagantly sexual, what sort of impression of Western peoples must our films give the Chinese world? It was indeed a treat to see a decent, modest, yet beautiful and thrilling Chinese film. So from there we went to the boat. The Chaplain, S., joined us at the jetty, and I was put aboard by these two friendly, earnest, but gloriously human missionaries. May they be rewarded for their unstinted and overabounding kindness to this traveller. C had but lately returned to China, leaving wife and children in Australia. "If there's going to be trouble," he said, "I'm glad to be back on the deck of the ship." He was interned in Fatshan and then in Canton from 1941 to 1945.

His great colleague, the Chaplain, with his wife, were shut up at Stanley Point at the same time; but they had the satisfaction of knowing that their growing family was being cared for in America. What an answer to my desire that seemed. Yet who knows what they have been and done just where their lot has been cast?

"When I leave, I shall have seen all the missionaries and all the main pieces of work but one that I came to see. In spite of all rebuffs and delays, this strikes me as very wonderful. Japan, America and now Italy, as well as China and Britain, have had a share in my journeys this week." And so goodbye to one more district and province for a little time. I'd been through Yunnan, Kueichow, Hunan, Kwangtung and Hong Kong in the first four months. What should I see next?

On Christmas Eve I found myself, at breakfast-time, sitting under the portrait of one Benito Mussolini, whilst I ate my rusks and coffee and eggs. It's a pleasanter picture to sit under than that of Hitler, I thought and think. For all its powers, more restful, less wild I picture to-day a corpse lying Jezebel-like in a public square in Milan and a shelter in Berlin where a raving madman is said to have perished of an overdose of medicine. Or was that a fake too? Anyway, the world is a little cleaner now that they are gone. The *S S Cortellazzo* was a freighter of the company that before 1914 was the Austrian Lloyd. She was part of Italy's spoil in 1918. Who will have the spoil this time, one wonders? It had accommodation for nine passengers, with a good deck to pace and part of the lower bridge enclosed for warmth and comfort. I found a seat in the sun and shelter of the starboard side after an hour's walk. My cabin mate I took at first for a Japanese, but daylight proved him to be a Shanghai Chinese who'd been in Hong Kong for the last two years and was engaged in purchasing medical supplies for the Chinese Red Cross. So we soon got on good terms with one another.

Another fellow passenger claimed that the great Chang Chih-Tung was his grandfather-in-law. If so, he'd something to be proud of. There never was a better example of the old Confucian tradition. This famous Viceroy, who introduced modern education and factories into Hupeh, saved many foreign lives by the stand he took in the infamous Boxer Year, 1900. My cabin companion spoke unusually good English. He flew from Chungking to Hong Kong before coming on this voyage, he told me. "Nothing

but blue sky above, and cloud beneath, as uninteresting as a sea voyage," says he In build and appearance, he would be taken for a Japanese anywhere, and his Chinese fellow passengers so described him So even they may be puzzled sometimes He, despite the glorious sea air, lay in the stuffy cabin, smoking cigarettes and reading most of the time The other four Chinese stayed in their cabins for reasons of *mal de mer* The Chinese are not, as a race, very fond of the sea, sharing this distress with the Jews of the Bible

It grew colder as we sailed further north, and the sun became less powerful The wind and the sea were a bit rougher, and I began wearing a heavy coat for the first time since leaving England There was no sort of observance of Christmas My observance was to read the old story again and to write to each member of the family So I had a sort of family party on the one bit of deck that was a little sunny and dry from spray Not a bad sort of Christmas after all, more thoughtful than sometimes

Two of my fellow travellers were Russians, one from Siberia and another from Harbin, compelled to begin life again in Shanghai—types of so many broken lives out East in those days A Russian hawker, with pieces of cloth to sell, had been a common sight in inland China ever since the Russian (1917) Revolution People said that they let down the prestige of the white man, and I suppose they did But "all that a man hath will he give for his life" Does not the white man's prestige have to be let down if ever there is to be peace in the earth? "Have been meditating on 1940 Hitler seems to me to be beaten already," I wrote I suppose I meant the famous theory of the *Blitzkrieg* had not seemed to come off "When will he be broken?" So surmising, I fell asleep and a voice in my ear said quite distinctly, "England has been overwhelmed" I wonder what is the psychology of that Anyway, it wasn't true, nor going to be Already Hitler was beaten in the air and hopeless on the sea, or so it seemed There was stalemate on the land His bluff had been called and there seemed then to be nothing but threats that wouldn't be needed if he could act Some paper or broadcast announced that America was to stay out of the war to save civilisation Wasn't it more likely that those who fought would save the life they lost than those who were to build 80,000-ton battleships to preserve their isolation inviolate So I read and reflected on the Far Eastern press on Christmas Day, 1939

As we sped on through and around the sunlit islands of the China sea, under cloud-scudded blue skies and over foam-flecked waves, I found myself playing chess with the Russian. There we fell to talk. What did I think of the World War? I told them of what I've written above. What did I think of the Chino-Japanese War? I told them that the Japanese seemed to have a very strong grip on Canton, the only "occupied" place I'd yet visited, and that I thought the alternative was the freedom of China or her permanent control by Japan, rather than a compromise. He said that Japan was beaten, but had only the uncertain evidence of friends of his from Japan to prove it. We agreed that America could solve things if she would, and we readily agreed that she wouldn't, for America in foreign affairs seemed to be, perhaps pardonably, a talker rather than a doer, or so we thought.

Even then we were never quite sure.

Remember that was my note in 1939. In 1946 it seems a little odd, but even now there are strong strains of isolationism in "God's own country."

Then we went on to talk of Russia. We knew that there were some 20,000 White Russian refugees in Shanghai, and as many Jews, knowing that their right to live there was conditioned on the Chinese War. What happened to them when Japan joined the Axis? I have often wondered. Large numbers were, of course, interned. "I'm not a Bolshevik," said the older Russian, "but I understand them. We were beaten in the Crimea, beaten by the Japanese, beaten in the Great War. We are always beaten. If Russia gets the chance, she'll level out the whole world as Japan has levelled out Ch'apei. I listen to the Moscow wireless. The old slogans of twenty years ago are being repeated now. It's the world revolution that is being pressed. If this war goes on for two or three years, there will be revolutions everywhere, and the world will run with blood as Russia ran with blood. This is Stalin's war. He has worked with consummate skill." On he talked. Underlying all was the condition of the whole of the Russians in Shanghai. "I'm employed by a great firm, and the only reason is that they can get no other engineer of my qualifications as cheaply. Our men do lowly jobs. All that are allowed them. Our women go to the bars and practise prostitution. We don't complain. We're beaten, but we want to live. I was in the American consulate the other day about a passport, and when the Vice-Consul saw I was a Russian he concerned himself to attend to three Americans.

first This was the official representative of the nation that talks about all men being born equal What is the equality? I'm not a Bolshevik, and I hate the cruelties of the Russian Revolution Thirty million of our people perished and no one heeded I'm not a Bolshevik, but I understand them" Had I stumbled upon one more tragedy of landless humanity of which no one was thinking much or, at least, publishing much? What agony this human world was going through just then

"And yet the sun is shining on the silver sea, and the whole horizon is filled with little ships going about their daily tasks of fishing, as though the Japanese didn't exist And God's in His heaven and most of the world, even now, is sane" There were many then who had their neutrality

So on December 27th we were docking in Shanghai, and my friend R. was pacing about on the cold and windy docks whilst Customs' officials were at their annoyingest He and other friends gave me a great welcome and helped in ten thousand ways I was soon installed in the kindly home of the A's From there I made arrangements to go on further north immediately Japanese permits, Japanese health certificates, Japanese-controlled Chinese currency all had to be obtained

I got a passage on a Kailan Mining Administration boat for Chingwantao I looked up all sorts of friends, old and new, in this strangely surrounded island of freedom The Chinese were beaten the Japanese were all around There were gunboats of several nationalities lying in the river and the International Settlement and French Settlement were still functioning under their accustomed administrations It wasn't by any means the first time those settlements had survived through periods of strain, "Shanghai is divided in two by the Soochow Creek Japanese and Scottish sentries face one another on the Garden Bridge To the Japanese all Chinese must remove their hats, so I took pleasure in removing mine to our Scottish sentries also There must have been a slump in the hat trade Somehow, hats had gone out of fashion The Chinese, for the most part, left them at home"

The Settlements were just the same as ever, but much more so—crowded streets, a welter of cars and rickshaws, all the nations under the sun, among whom you were either "quick" or dead There were goods galore in the shops In French Town more buildings and skyscrapers were going up There were thousands of Jews here, and thousands more were said to be coming to almost

the only refuge left for them in the world. So from a quiet, retiring Christmas season I'd ploughed on in that sea. What personal and epistolary welcomes awaited me, one especially from my old Hankow home. They'd been following my movements and, whatever happened, I wasn't to leave them out.

"Please do not, because of the difficulties of communications, fail to come to this district of Hupeh, where you've spent half your life. Our map must be more clearly in your mind than that of any other place," my old Chinese friends and colleagues wrote. Yes, I'd go if there was time enough I agreed, but it was to the north that I was going then. The western journey must wait. Should I have time to do it all? The A's, the H's, and so many more who made Shanghai home for me have suffered years of internment since then. Happily, duty took R elsewhere, and he's remained free and as helpful as he's free. But what rejoicings and reunions we had that brief day or two. We left Shanghai in the S.S. *Kaiping* on December 30th.

We were shocked by the devastation of Woosung. In the Shanghai settlements, all signs of disaster had long since been obliterated north of the Soochow Creek, but the course down to Woosung showed a very different story. In the river there was little but Japanese shipping. This is the entry of New Year's Eve.

"I've had the sleep of a lifetime and woken up more refreshed than for many a long day. This little ship is tossing about like a cockleshell under a strong N-W wind, with foam-flecked and laughing waves, under a clear blue sky. We sailed along last night with darkened ports and no lights, not even a cigarette was permitted. But the deck was very nice when your eyes got used to the darkness; and the stars and half moon were up. There are 'enemy' merchant ships of sorts at many points on the Pacific, and no risks are being taken."

Chingwantao was the port of the Kailan Mining Administration, and is named after Chinshih Huangti, the Emperor who built the Great Wall, 200 B.C., which reaches the sea at Shan Hai Kuan—"Mountain-sea Pass"—some eight miles away. At that time there was still a little colony of twenty Britons there, not really apprehensive of trouble for them in the East.

So 1940 dawned.

"The *Kaiping* justified its reputation by 'doing everything but stand on its head' last night and there weren't a great many people at breakfast to say 'Happy New Year.' The one who did

added 'And may peace come before the end of it' The Captain celebrated with a cocktail party I went, and drank lemonade. Most of the rest of them looked as if they'd have been happier with lemonade than the yellow mixture in little glasses with which they whetted their appetites, but they wouldn't have said so for worlds, poor things"

We reached Chingwantao late on New Year's Day and slept on board in spite of the winches You can sleep through anything if you're tired enough The Japanese passport officer was chatty and kind Evidently the Kailan Mining Administration and the new overlords were working harmoniously together We rose at 5 a m, went from the docks to the station in a private railway car at six, and, with the help of S, who had the tickets already purchased, boarded the 6 45 Peiping Express, arriving at Tangshan in time for elevenses

We had breakfast on the train, ministered to by a Japanese waitress The whole train service was Japanese run This meant cleanliness and punctuality, barring guerrillas or other "accidents" At Tangshan I found a great school of 870 pupils, 400 of them boarders It was the breakdown of Government schools that had made this come about I stood on a table in a playground and addressed them all in English A Chinese minister did some brilliant translation work and really got it over Then we feasted and talked with the very able Chinese staff and with the missionaries and some of the K M A staff Tangshan was the headquarters of that corporation and the centre of railways and cement works, as well as of mining The manager seemed to feel that the Japanese were there for years to come, if not for ever, said he was a businessman and not a politician, and, as such, had come to terms and was co-operating with the new rulers In 1941 the K M A staff shared the fate of the missionaries and were ultimately interned in Weihsien, Shantung But when I was there, Tangshan, ecclesiastical and commercial, seemed to be making a pretty good best of a bad job Anything else was said below your breath It wasn't all unalloyed peace, as the following entry shows

"Soon after six o'clock on January 3rd, H arrived from Tientsin with the shocking news that our hospital at Laoling, Shantung, had been destroyed by fire by the Japanese on Christmas Day The neighbourhood was accused of harbouring the 8th Route Army, and the claim was that our hospital had been

involved The trouble is that the common people are apt to suffer twice; once from the guerrillas, who come and stay whether they are welcome or not, and once from the invaders, who are apt to blame them for what they are helpless to avoid I think the ordinary non-political peasant cursed them both; though, after some experience of the Japanese and their treatment of his women, he was apt to curse them more”

So on this disquieting note, after more visits and conferences with teachers and other Chinese leaders, on January 5th we were on the train once more, wondering what we should find in Tientsin and beyond For it was still the time when foreigners might be searched and even stripped by Japanese searchers at the barriers, as those who lived in China at that time won’t soon forget.

Of the activities of the K.M.A. in this northern area, I was glad to note that there was quite considerable social service. They had central and local hospitals in the area, not only for their large staff and workmen, but for the public in general They were also responsible for some seventeen modern schools of various grades, and were more than generous and willing to co-operate in these and other efforts for the good of the area Where so much is often said of the exploitation of the people by business enterprise, here, at least, was one company with some sense of moral and social obligation to the people on whom its fortunes were founded It was a very delightful experience to talk to the Manager and to realise the ideals he was seeking to carry out Before we slept that night we gathered round the fireside and talked of the “number of things” of which the Church and the world are so full The only silent member was Mrs B I wonder what she was thinking and would gladly have given “a penny for your thoughts.”

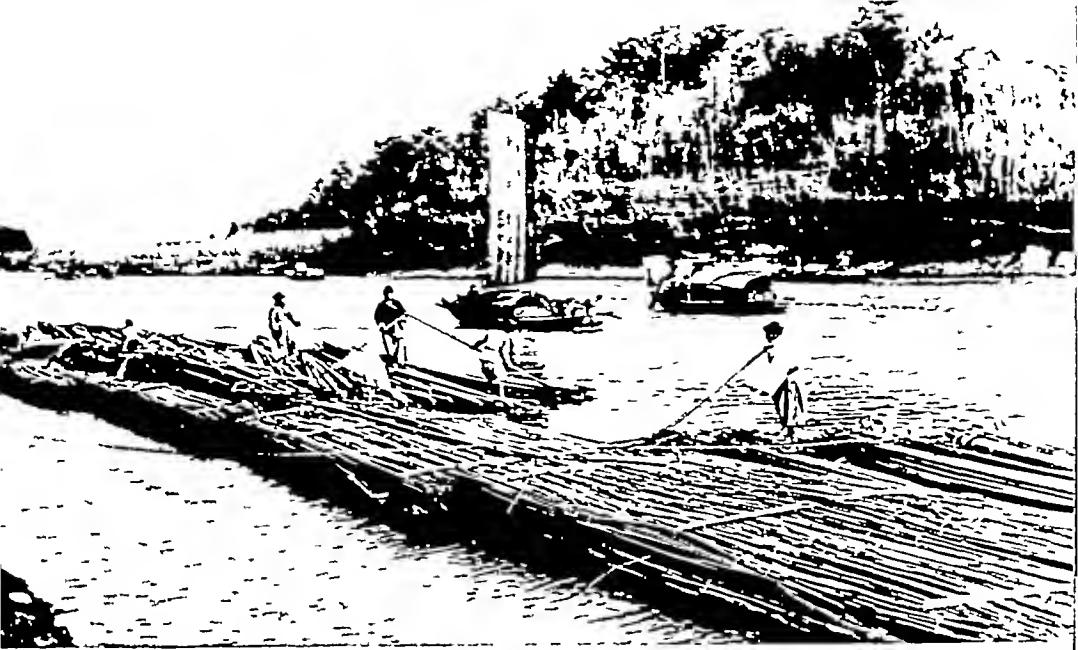
So from the winds and the winter sand-storms, from Tangshan’s hill and the chimney stacks of the cement works, from the Japanese controlled university and railway we sped on our way, little dreaming that almost every foreigner we’d met was to spend years in an internment camp. Otherwise, I wonder if the life of that industrial city has greatly altered in the intervening years I could imagine the Chinese pressed men still being drilled till 1945 for the Japanese Army I could dream of the sandy plains of the winter being covered with the high growth of maize stalks in the summer, where the guerrillas and the bandits may waylay the unwary I could see the blue-clad Chinese populace bending like grass before the storm, apparently acquiescent, but only

waiting their chance to rise again. The arming and training of puppet troops was a double-edged business. There were those who, with Japanese weapons in their hands, even then, to my knowledge, had taken an early opportunity of transferring their loyalty back to the land of their birth, and who could blame them then or afterwards?

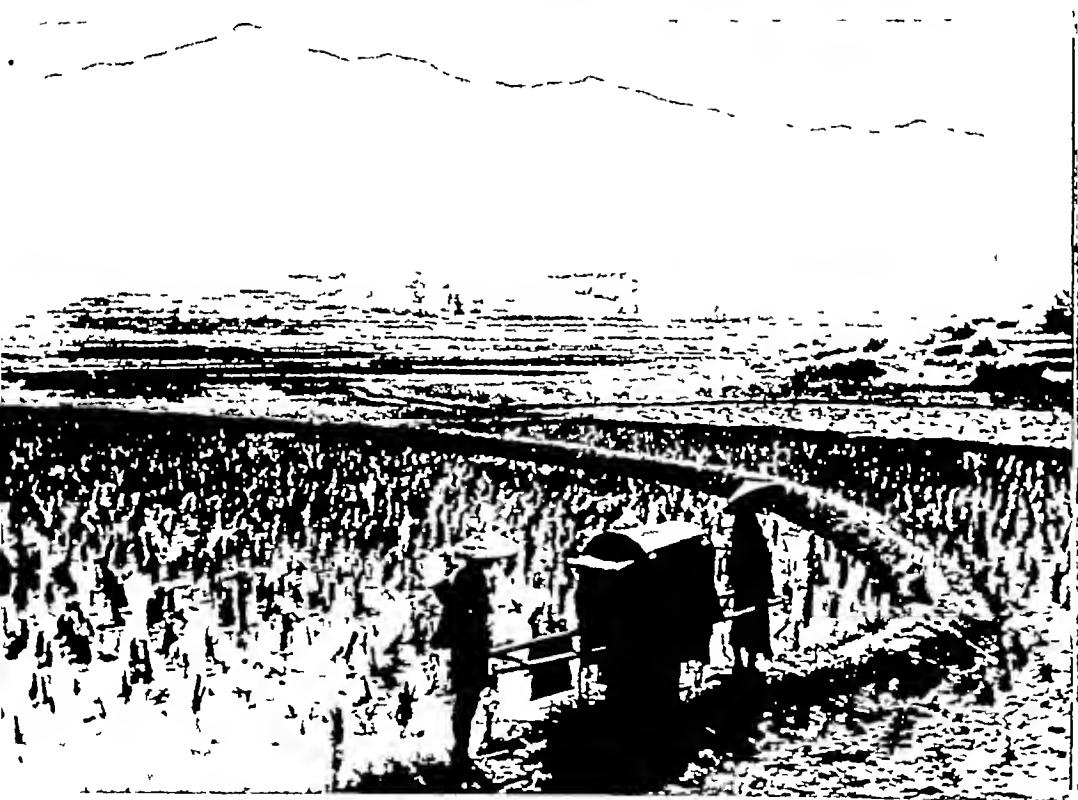
## TIENTSIN BARRIER PEIPING ALTAR

THE train by which we travelled to Tientsin was the Fushun Express At its northern terminus it connected with the ferry to Japan Our second-class carriage was full of Japanese commercial travellers and other Japanese civilians We noticed them comparing their samples of the goods with which their portmanteaux were stuffed There were no Chinese at all in our carriage They were, only permitted to travel third, which was described as "coolie class" Coolies don't travel much except on their own feet they can't afford to go by rail. So these cooie carriages must have contained some very interesting travellers. The first class was reserved, as usual, for high Japanese officers and officials The whole service was, of course, run by the Japanese. We'd to show passports on the train, but there was neither difficulty nor delay We were classed, I suppose, as belonging to the superior nations grade, along with the Japanese The difficulties would be in the coolie class It was dusk when, having travelled through the sand and salt-pans of the area, we reached Tientsin We bundled ourselves and baggage into a taxi, not knowing to what annoyance we might be subjected at the notorious barrier, where Britons had been stripped and searched and where there were often delays A Chinese soldier was on duty, under Japanese control, of course He opened the taxi door, looked us over and listened to our words of explanation. Hastily looking up and down the road to see if any Japanese officer were about, he jerked us on with his thumb We didn't even have to alight, much less undergo any search of our persons or belongings *Siang-puh-tao-tih-fu-ch'i* we call that in China—"unanticipated happiness" It wasn't ever thus They told me of coolies kept standing there for days, and of foreigners who'd had to spend the night outside the barrier That was a time of strain between the British and the Japanese We'd enough on our hands in the West "No incidents of any kind," was the direction of the Ambassador So the British suffered indignities and "wished for the day" How much worse things they were to suffer they didn't dream in the opening of 1940

That morning, in the gathering at Tangshan, I'd had a song



Water transport Bamboo rafts and river craft Note low mat cover to the boats



Road transport Chair and coolies on old high road through rice fields, Hunan



The mile-wide Yangtse at Hankow in winter  
are entirely submerged

In summer the banks



City of Wenchow, Chekiang, showing city wall and sacred island

sung in Chinese to my honour, and a Chinese orator had declared that from the days of Robert Morrison this was the unique occasion and that Hallelujahs were due to God, for my visit to Tang-shan was proof that God had not deserted China "It's all very silly and all very pleasing," I wrote Some little satisfaction it certainly was, and still remains, that even this brief visit relieved them in their isolation

Mrs S welcomed us with good cheer, and so we came to the end of a tiring but perfect day

Next day the 7th, we called on the Consul-General about that burned-down hospital He had thirty years of service, where Japan held sway, to his credit British-Japanese relationships had definitely improved under his consulship His working theory was that Japanese couldn't be browbeaten and mustn't be blamed That only made things worse They could be appealed to as men of honour and good reputation, and that was the right approach So Japanese too, had "face," and even more than Chinese It was their face you must appeal to I've met many Britons who know their Japan since then, and they all agree with this experienced Consul It was new to me at the time

From him we went to the editor of the Tientsin English paper His view was that international relationships were on the mend in China and that Japan, in spite of appearances, being a country essentially artistic and home-loving, was in her heart getting definitely tired of the drab adventure That makes strange reading six years later, and yet, as I travelled on, I heard enough corroborating evidence to make me feel that, once the military grip was released, the re-education of Japan might be easier than has been supposed

There'd been a terrible flood from which the plains around Tientsin were still suffering It seems the Japanese suffered severely both in material and in life, both in their Japanese Concession and in the grounds of the famous school of Chang Po-lin which, after a heavy bombing, had been taken over as a camp Both areas were low-lying and the flood waters sudden and deep "We couldn't oppose them," a Chinese said to me, "but God did" I wonder how many others thought so too

Opposite S's house was a flood refugee camp of 4,000 people The camp was splendidly arranged, row upon row of low huts in the simplest style, but warm There were great kitchens, a school, a women's chapel, a delousing house and a hospital The refugees

wouldn't be able to return to their villages before March at the earliest, it was said. This camp was run by able *Salvation Army* missionaries on behalf of the Tientsin Municipal Council, with a good deal of voluntary help from others.

Invasion, barriers, bombing and optimism—this was the strange mixture I found. In Tangshan a responsible British business-man had assured me that he was an “invincible optimist.” In Tientsin another business-man said “You've come to a town of optimists.” They'd had great troubles and were still harassed, but that they declared to be their mood. After years of life in internment camps, there were more solid grounds for their optimism in 1945 than then, I think. What a shock Japan's sudden attack in 1941 must have been, and yet their optimism will be justified ultimately. I did the things I was expected to do: visited the famous Mackenzie Hospital, spoke to the boys of the Anglo-Chinese College, saw the great Asbury Memorial Church, and risked the barriers again, to go and preach in our Chinese church in the Chinese city. The sequel to that was a visit of Japanese detectives to the church to know what we'd been up to. So, quite clearly, someone was taking notes, and we must be careful how we embarrassed our friends. This was a side of things we'd had to watch for a time in the National Revolution of 1926.

There was some speculation as to what sort of a time we should have at the barriers, for our East Road Church was in one of the main thoroughfares of the Chinese city. We'd to show our passports once or twice as we passed through the searching-huts, and enter our names, ages, destination and address on cyclostyled sheets provided, but, apart from that, were not delayed at all. The restrictions on foreigners had clearly been lightened. The Chinese were standing there, hour after hour, in long queues—partly because of the insufficiency of the Japanese to cope with such a stream of people. Chinese patience is equal to anything, and the queues seem to continue all day long. The story current in Tientsin about the searching of the British, about which shocking stories had disturbed London, as well as the Far East, was as follows:

After the capture of the Chinese city of Tientsin in 1937, the Japanese had put barriers between the city and foreign settlement, called the Concession, to restrict the movement of currency in which they were interested and to show their authority. It had always been customary at times of unrest, for foreigners, as for

Chinese, to have their baggage searched Yet, when Japanese soldiers began turning out foreigners' pockets and running their hands over their clothing and their bodies for smuggled goods, that was a new experience to foreigners at least They were greatly incensed at being subject to such indignities The Chinese had never done this Why should the Japanese be so insulting? they thought A young Briton, clad in summer shorts and shirt, and full, perhaps, of spirits of more than one kind, expressed his annoyance quite vigorously, and told them they might just as well take his shirt and pants off as well To his surprise and chagrin, they took him at his word, and he found himself naked in the hands of the searchers Subsequently, a good many others were treated in the same way When remonstrances were made, the Japanese weren't at first inclined to alter, for nudity did not shock them as it does the West A Japanese high official even offered to undress himself, if it would be any good, just to show there was nothing in it Eventually, this embarrassing procedure ceased, but when I was there it was commonly held that but for the folly of this young British "blood" there need never have been any trouble of the kind at all At a time of tension, this had been an added anxiety to those compelled to move about

The Navy does these things much better When I landed in Hankow in January, 1927, just after the loss of the British Concession there to the Chinese Revolution, I found all the young British volunteers confined to a great building, where the Navy would call upon them if needed The Navy wasn't having these lads wandering about with their rifles and possibly with an overload of spirits to keep their spirits up It thought them safer locked up in a building preparing for action, if needed "It's a way they have in the Navy" They've policed the world for a good long time now, and you can't teach them a great deal

In this bariered situation, certain precautions had been taken Among the sights of the Tientsin Concessions were the great heaps of bags of flour covered with matting here and there in selected places There was evidently food for a long time There were also three or four camps for refugees, best organised by the Salvation Army The religious work was shared out among the Churches, and much was being done, except by the Roman Catholics, who didn't seem to set much store by ordinary evangelistic methods

We spent parts of two days in Peiping—twenty-seven hours in all—being guests of a most generous and sociable American

Methodist, Dr Feldt, with whom I had consultations on matters of policy. When we weren't talking, he was putting all he had in the way of amenities at my disposal. Is any other nation so forthcoming in this sort of thing as the American? If so, I should like to visit there. Through his kind help, not a moment of my stay was wasted.

When I stepped from the second-class carriage with its Japanese shopkeepers and commercial travellers, I found the place was called Peking, and not Peiping. The Japanese had restored the old name here and elsewhere, because, to them, the Revolution had never happened, and they were just conducting an "incident" against "bandits." Some incident! Some bandits! The "incident" lasted eight years, King Canute, and your feet were quite wet in the end. Anyhow, that was the Japanese theory then. Outside the station was the legend, "Oppose the British," and outside the city gate I saw, "Overthrow the British." These were said to be "spontaneous" Chinese notices. Our Chinese guide in the Temple of Heaven said, "We aren't opposed to the British," and he said other things too under his breath. At that time China was full of "spontaneous" actions carefully organised from behind, which were funny indeed when the strain had eased.

After tiffin that first day, S and I went off in Dr. F.'s car to the Temple and Altar of Heaven. Just before the troubles, Chiang Kai-shek had had it all cleaned up, and it looked more beautiful than ever. My mind turned back to the Parthenon, and I wondered if, after all, China's temple enclosure was not more impressive. Its sweep is so vast, its white marble terraces and altar so pure, the tiles and painted pillars of the Temple so beautiful. The setting, with heaven above and spacious earth around, is altogether wonderful. Even with Japanese tourists poking around with their cameras, its beauty was in no way abated. I've described this altar and its worship in *China, My China* (pp 151-4) and need not repeat.

"Apart from ourselves there were only a very few, and they Japanese, sightseers there to-day. Does the silent altar cry to heaven? Do the stones cry out?" Anyhow the out-of-work Chinese interpreter, late of Thomas Cook and Son, who attached himself to us left us in no doubt as to what those who "held their peace" were thinking. Inside Peiping you moved where you would, for the place was entirely under Japanese control and perhaps better run than in the days of its liberty. It was said that the Japanese

were developing a "Japanese city," as the Manchus did a Manchu city Did they plan to stay as long as the Manchus? I wondered

Moved once again as I went through her straight, broad streets and massive gates, I wrote "Peiping is still the vastest, the most spacious and the most glorious city in China What megalomania of an autocrat conceived it all? The Pyramids, Babylon, Peiping are witnesses to the colossal ideas of autocracy The glory of the legations has departed A foreign sentry here and there stands on guard The legation quarter still exists, with its protected, embrasured walls The Japanese are the only foreigners in evidence, and they are much in evidence There are soldiers and civilians, men and well-dressed, kimonoed ladies They govern and they live as if they belonged and meant to belong My host cultivates them as and where he can, thinks it's good for everybody that he should do so, and has a military pass that seems to open every gate "

We went at night to attend the Union Church Forum in the Peiping Hotel The Forum consisted of a light supper, a speech and a discussion Everybody was there, and I learned a lot from missionaries evacuated from Honan because of the invasion trouble They talked of "spontaneous" anti-British meetings, but no direct attacks upon the persons of the British When the Japanese wanted to be rid of you, they attacked your Chinese colleagues or your servants This was unpleasant for your friends, and rather a subtle attack upon you It was a Chinese organisation that did these things, but it was in Japanese-controlled Honan and, whosoever the hands might be, it was clear that it wasn't the voice or the mind of China

"It's curiously reminiscent of the anti-foreign movement of 1927 in method and aim, which was to remove all possible challenge to the dominating—in this case, Japanese—authority "

The speaker was an American professor of Yenching University He gave a most illuminating and brilliant address on "Italy in the Present World Conflict" He had three Italian officials present in his audience, which, as my son would remark, was a "snorter" What he said (in 1940) was that Italy, as things were, would rather fight with the Allies than with Germany, unless they were obviously going to lose, for she'd more to gain and less to lose from the Allies I remembered this when, in May of that same year, Mussolini at long last jumped off the fence He was sure we'd lost, and so was everyone else but our stupid, stubborn people

and the Prime Minister who inspired and led us. We were too daft to know we were beaten.

"I wonder if the northerners are duller than the southerners or just too proud to listen? Or is it perhaps a mistake?" I commented on January 9th, when asked to speak in English to Dr. F.'s school and be translated. On reflection, I think it may be easier in the Mandarin-speaking area for southerners to understand northerners than vice versa, for linguistic reasons. The north has many more sounds than the south which, when you think of it, makes it easier for the southerner to understand than vice versa. This I write for those who know Chinese. To others it's all a Chinese puzzle, anyway. After prayers we bowled along in Dr. F.'s car beneath the crimson pillars of Peiping's wooden "five," "triumphal arches," past the "Forbidden City," the Winter Palace, and the great modern City Library, over roads that had lost their inches of dust and been made hard and firm for motor traffic, out of the city gates and away towards the western hills and Yenching University. I wanted to see its famous President, Leighton Stuart, who had achieved the miracle of carrying on his great institution of Chinese learning untrammelled and unhampered by the Japanese, and yet approved by the Chinese Government. He too became an internee in 1941, but is actively free again now. He was born in Nanking, where his father was a missionary. He speaks Chinese "like a native," and would, I think, be regarded as the most outstanding China missionary of his generation. When I told him of my journey and my questions he said, "I remember travelling as a boy, with my father, on the Grand Canal. At one of the locks we got into a terrible jam. The boats were straining and cracking. The boatmen were cursing and poling. The passengers were yelling and screaming. I was very frightened. My father sat there in the stern 'Don't be afraid,' he said. 'The Chinese have been doing this for hundreds of years. They'll get through all right.' It'll be so in this case too," he said. "Give them time. They've their own ways of doing things. They'll come through: you'll see." How often I've thought since of that half-hour in his study with this quiet, certain man. I've thought of it in the long years of his internment. By ways past even his imagination to conceive, his prophecy has come true. The sailors and boatmen have cursed and quarrelled more than they should. The strain has been very heavy. But China is free. She's come through at last.

The same day I called on another American friend. He knew what Stuart said, but was frankly pessimistic.

"There are 200,000 Japanese merchants in North China," he said, "subsidised by their Government. Lots of them don't find it the El Dorado they imagined, and have returned home disappointed, if not ruined. Others take their places. You could see peace patched up with the soldiers, but the Government must stand behind these merchants. They've no alternative. If they threw these men over, there'd be such a revolution as no country could stand. No, the Japanese are here, and for a very long time. There's no help for it. We've got to get used to it and carry on with our job as best we can." He was no Tangshan or Tientsin optimist. He couldn't share the views of Yenching's President, yet that President has turned out to be the truer prophet. This is how I summed it all up. "This I seem to have learned of the Peiping area. The Japanese penetration and grip steadily grows and strengthens. Formerly the railways were held, but trains were only able to run infrequently, and there were many 'accidents.' Now the county cities are held as well as railways, and the Japanese-controlled trains are running according to schedule. The area is full of Japanese traders who've come to make a living, if not a fortune. Every train in which I've travelled has been full. This civilian as well as military occupation is unexpectedly widespread."

"The countryside is debatable country, and the Chinese there have no more lost their optimism than in the unoccupied places I've visited. Foreign judgments vary immensely. Some say the Japanese must choose between fighting and friendliness. Either they must have a million men here to maintain their grip or they must seek some friendlier approach for the good of East Asia. Others see a Japanese victory and Chinese surrender in sight." Well, that was six years ago and we'll let it stand.

On our return journey we went to see the matchless "Jade Buddha" in a temple overlooking the Winter Palace and Northern Lake. Lit up, as it is now, with electric light, its appearance is most pure and human—the most beautiful figure I've ever seen in a Chinese temple. We went on a little and then climbed the "Coal Hill," where the last Ming Emperor hanged himself three hundred years ago, as the Manchu invaders entered the city. From the hill we overlooked the golden roofs and the marble terraces of the dread "Forbidden City." What were those palaces

thinking now as Japanese tourists trod their courts? Looking up to the north, we picked out the Imperial City, and beyond that the far-extending wall of the Tartar city. The Chinese city lay to the south, beyond the palaces. Was ever any city so vast and beautiful, one wondered as one viewed it from the hill? So after a feast with Chinese friends and listening to their stories of present distresses and a Church that, in spite of all and because of all, grows and spreads, we boarded the train again, took our place in the second-class carriage among the Japanese merchants, came safely through the barriers and were back in S's home in Tientsin as the evening fell, having fulfilled two unforgettable days.

## JOURNEYINGS EXTRAORDINARY

THE only remained farewells and packing before I was off again, this time down the Tientsin-Puk'ou Railway to the Yangtse and Nanking. On the last day in Tientsin I went to the famous Anglo-Chinese College, with its 500 boys, and was interested to note "School prayers have never ceased for a day since the Revolution (1926), although it is a school duly registered with the Chinese Government." This can hardly have been true of any other registered school in China, and was doubtless due to its position in the British Concession at Tientsin. The floods had been no respecters of concessions, and the water had risen from 4 to 5 feet in the buildings and left behind a leprous-looking damp that had risen right up to the top story. There was enough discoloration and destruction to take the heart out of anyone, but Mr. L. and his colleagues were cheerful enough.

"I told them something of my travels in China. They get very little uncensored news—none at all in the Chinese papers and only a little in the foreign papers. The Japanese themselves can know little of the real conditions in 'unoccupied' China, however good their information service may be." I could have told them a lot, but it was the last thing I had in mind to do. My journal wasn't for publication till times were different.

So I bade them goodbye and prepared to be off on the morrow.

"Once more I'm ready and packed for the unknown road. It will be 4 a.m. breakfast again, and we should be in Tsinan in the afternoon." My going out and my coming in were to be more wonderful than ever, but I had got to the point where special good fortune seemed to be my mysterious but daily lot. I no longer doubted if I should get through, but only by what path. The next entry in my diary is dated Tsinan, January 11th, 1940.

"S and I are here at the Cheeloo University, where we stay for a day. The others are at the Station Hotel, pressing on to Wuting a day ahead of us. We got through the 'barriers' without any trouble and were pulling out of Tientsin at 7.30. For the first twenty miles we were passing through frozen floods. There were still 40,000 refugees in the Tientsin area, waiting for the spring. Soon we reached the brown earth, characteristic of this flat

Shantung plain, and came through it the whole of the 240 miles that separate Tsinan from Tientsin No hill could be seen—just villages, brown earth and a few trees, and all the water frozen" "Take the vigorous measures of boycotting against the British," I had read on a placard at a well-guarded railway station What Chinese or Japanese scribe had written it I know not Certainly not many of Shantung's soldiers, merchants or other sorts of "coolies" could have read even a Chinese slogan, let alone an English one So doubtless it was there for travellers like me As we drew near Tsinan, we were amazed at the strange and perhaps temporary shrinkage of the Yellow River Formerly a turgid and wide river, it was then a mere narrow stream, due to the diversion of its course by the breaking of the dykes, in 1938, during the fighting near Kaifeng It was Japan's sorrow and not "China's Sorrow" this time It has since followed a new course, and now reaches the sea at a point on the borders of Kiangsu

I found the usual welcome and great kindness from all the missionaries What a great gift to China they are, highly qualified some, disinterested helpers all I realised this more than ever as I travelled about There were seventy-one foreigners on that University campus, including staff, wives, families and evacuees from North China Next day we tried to do something about that burned-down hospital We called first on Mr Nishida, Japanese Adviser to the Shantung "puppet" Government He'd been Consul-General in the days of Han Fu-Ch'u When Japan invaded Shantung in 1937, General Han temporised, not knowing on which side his rice-bowl would be safe This meant a feeble resistance when courage was called for He was taken to Wuchang, put on his trial and condemned Though a Provincial Governor and a high general, he had to face the firing-squad This execution convinced me, as it must have convinced others, how serious was Chiang Kai-shek's determination to resist Nishida was polite, but very voluble We explained to him that the Church was an international thing, and its hospitals were not lightly to be destroyed, as at Laoling, by his Government's troops We were "the friends of all and the enemies of none" Actions like this would tarnish the fair name of Japan He said that this was a military matter and beyond his jurisdiction, that, in contested areas, villages were quite likely to be harassed from both sides He could accept no responsibility The commanders had to decide what was military necessity. I suppose, if the position had been

reversed, I should have given the same sort of reply The length of his speech was, perhaps, an act of courtesy compared with the brevity that would have characterised mine We hoped the interview would get into some official files and keep this sort of thing from spreading, for many of our friends were in exposed and isolated places

After that, it was a question of round after round of visits, and meetings with Chinese and missionary groups, handing over my pictures of the situation, gathered over months of travel, and learning theirs They were living in great difficulties Their university was evacuated to far-away Chengtu, in Szechuan, but they were keeping the home fires burning under the "puppet" Government "You can't let a whole generation of children go without Christian education," they said They'd had two and a half years of it then, and more than three were to pass before their problem ended in internment camps They knew that free China would criticise them as catspaws of the Japanese What they did they did from conviction, after full consideration One traveller, anyhow, judges that they were right At the end of all this and much more, I wrote

"One young doctor is getting up to-morrow at 5 a m to stand in the queue and get us our bus tickets, and Dr L himself is coming for us in his car at 6 30 to take us to the bus station The kindness and courtesy of folk at one station is only exceeded by that at the next It's most moving and humbling" It's to Cheeloo University that Sir Herbert Phillips, many years a consul in China, paid a great and sincere tribute at the China Christian Universities Association Meeting on June 1st, 1945 "I know," he said, "these people do their work without any ulterior motives, but they are, as a matter of fact, real ambassadors of the goodwill of Britain to China" We, of course, have always known and said such things, but that tribute from a distinguished British consul is of real and lasting importance These were not merely the words of courtesy, but of a man who had taken the trouble to visit and inspect this well-known University

Next day, January 13th, I found myself in Wuting, in the home of Dr and Mrs P, next-door neighbours for twelve years in Hankow, through riot, revolution and civil war We were no ordinary friends He'd gone up north to fill a temporary gap and found himself in one of the most volcanic spots on earth Happily, he was not interned in 1941, as he had left for furlough, spending

his old age in Australia. He told me that, for the first time in his life, he'd been unable to fulfil his medical vows. Sometimes he might go secretly at dead of night to a wounded man in the country, but he dare receive no wounded man into hospital without police approval. There was no danger to himself. The danger was to those he would help if he could. His presence anywhere might be a signal for a man-hunt for a wounded guerrilla of the 8th Route Army. Still, there was much he could do, however much he had to mind his steps. There was no one there who wasn't glad to have him, and far into the night we sat and talked of old times and the present. This is the tale of the cross-country journey from Tsinan to Wuting that I'd made that day.

"Our bus was largely taken up with Japanese soldiers returning to billets or on duty. They were softly-spoken and courteous to us. Our Chinese fellow travellers had to undergo being searched at a number of stations on the road, but we, as foreigners, were exempted from all special inconveniences. The road was level and good. The whole ninety miles was nothing but level, dusty earth through which the spring wheat was beginning to show. It's said that the Shantung Plain was formed by the sand-storms that have blown in from the Gobi Desert, filling shallow lakes. You can get water, by digging only a few feet, almost anywhere. Villages were innumerable. This must be a very thickly-populated countryside. Plenty of dust land was to be seen. The road was made of the same ever-spreading dust, just hardened a little. There was no hill higher than a Chinese grave or the embanked road on which we travelled. In summer and early autumn the country is a paradise, but at this time of the year it's difficult to imagine how such dust can blossom as the rose. The city wall of Wuting, wind-blown and eaten into holes by driving sand, connects itself, in my mind, with pictures of the Gobi Desert."

When we arrived, all the missionaries were there to greet us, standing amongst Japanese soldiers and such Chinese as didn't fear to hang about. This visit wasn't being made "in a corner."

"What sort of a journey have you had?" they queried.

"Quite good," we answered. "We stopped for a while at each thirty-mile stage, but were treated very courteously."

"Well, we'll come with you next time. We'd no end of difficulties, had breakdowns and changes of buses, and finally landed here in the dark, sitting on a lorry-load of bricks."

It was all very kindly and welcoming to us, anyhow. "We

started to-day with an overcast sky, which had turned very cold by midday and arrived here in sunshine and blue sky Which is somewhat how I feel China never was as bad as is described in the papers, nor is this war-torn China We have been driving to-day over a world that's far from settled There was plenty of evidence of Japanese strength on this military road Laoling, where our hospital has been destroyed, is only thirty miles away Some of those refugees were here, but all our paths were peace" I'd come to Wuting to try to enhearten isolated and harassed folks, both missionaries and Chinese I inspected the hospital and saw the doctor's sanctum, which had been machine-gunned from the air A bullet had pierced the window and splintered the doctor's chair I saw the school, registered with the "puppet" Government, but carrying on much as usual I met with Chinese who'd come in from the countryside, and the missionaries, too, talking with them far into the night A young Irish bride showed me a sketch she'd made of Jesus among real Chinese children She'd been out in the street and the market to sketch her living children Now she is free again from internment, there's a great interpretation of China at her finger ends I heard of her being stranded one cold morning at the bus station in Tsinan She was too far back in the queue, and the full bus went on without her Her husband was ninety miles away, waiting, and she alone She pestered the management, but without avail She waited in the hope that some "extra" would be put on, but nothing appeared Then she saw some Chinese ladies, evidently most attractive to the officers here She put her arm in theirs, told them that she had a man whom she was desperate to see How she got it over in their broken English and her beginner's Chinese, I can't imagine In a short time a vehicle was found and she bowled into Wuting almost as soon as the bus We expect initiative and pluck, but, under all the circumstances, the initiative and pluck of this artistic woman takes some beating Her husband, too, and his colleague I found had been spending much of their time in no-man's-land, taking money and relief to starving folk They had a double complication in that part of the country You might be executed by the Japanese for handling National currency or by the Chinese guerrillas for using Federated Reserve notes, the Japanese and "puppet" currency Whilst this was primarily a Chinese headache, it would be difficult for missionaries who got caught out in either area Yet the hungry had to be fed Neither the guerrillas

nor the Japanese were inclined deliberately to damage missionaries out on their deeds of mercy. Yet when you're cycling along sunken roads and suddenly appear on the level, it's the easiest thing possible, in a time of tension, for nervous hands to loose off a gun. Both of them had stories to tell of bullets that had passed them by. If I were to begin to tell of the courage of one and all, where should I end? "There aren't any missionary adventures nowadays like our fathers used to have," people tell us. The fact is that there are so many that no one takes any notice of them. In China, at least, since 1911 they've just been part of the day's work. Not any adventures, indeed!

I'll never forget an hour and a half I spent with some thirty or forty farmers and village Christians right out of the guerrilla and fighting area. "You won't make head or tail of their horrible country brogue," said S., who seemed to have a thorough contempt for my Hankow speech. "Give me a Chinese minister," I said, "and leave me alone with them." We settled down to an hour or two of the frankest questions and answers and opened our hearts and minds to one another. They told me of what they were suffering from both sides. They were imperturbable, going back to live in danger as they ploughed their fields, but absolutely confident that at long last the Judge of all the earth will do right. I sometimes feel that such a faith is easier to the simple than to the wise, firmer in the country than in the town, and even more characteristically Chinese than British.

When they asked me about my view of the issue of the war, I told them I was a guest and not a politician. For one never knew even there, who might be listening, and I didn't want to be an embarrassment to my Chinese or my foreign hosts. They saw the point, these largely illiterate but shrewd farmers, and nodded their heads in approval. Their faith has been put to a longer test than they or we thought likely, but they and others like them have carried through.

All these things, with feastings, courtesies and meetings, took more time than I'd planned. I was always under great pressure of time if I was to finish my job. It was with great reluctance that I deferred my return journey for an extra day. In the morning F. got out, quite early, into the bus queue. When we arrived at the bus station an hour later, he was still where he'd started. After another half an hour's wait in the cold, he was still where he'd been. It was like the Pool of Bethesda. Whenever he tried to

advance his place, some nimble Chinese stepped in and was there before him. The buses were few and the people many, and it looked as if we shouldn't get a seat. Just then a Japanese lorry drove in. "Oh," said P., "there's my friend So-and-So," referring to the Japanese driver. "He was very helpful when we moved into the hospital here. I'll see if he can help." He helped all right. Belonging to the "Master Race," he made his way into the ticket office and got our tickets. Consequently, we were safely seated in No. 1 bus whilst there was yet plenty of room. My companions found the going good and were particularly amused at what happened on my seat. I'm said to be heavier than the average—certainly than the Japanese average. As we bounced along, heavy-weight found the seat more and more comfortable and the light-weight Japanese soldiers rose like cream to the top. It was quite clear to the eyewitnesses that heavily accoutred Japanese soldiers weren't equal to solid John Bull when it came to claiming their share of a bus seat on a Shantung road. There were no incidents. It was a perfectly peaceful journey. A new experience was to see large numbers of countrymen riding cheap Japanese bicycles. One of the cyclists went along with two kerosene tins balanced on his back wheel. Wonderful travellers, the Chinese. We also met a heavily armed convoy of forty trucks going in the direction of the guerrillas. Arrived in Tsinan, I went to Stein's Station Hotel whilst my friends went into the city on business. When they came back, they said, "You couldn't have come to Tsinan yesterday, for no one arrived at all. They say that two Chinese soldiers were being led in the morning to execution in Wuting when one of them broke loose and succeeded in killing two Japanese soldiers before he himself was killed. That upset things so badly that there were no buses yesterday." So, after all, the day's delay hadn't mattered. If that story seems a little too much for you, gentle reader, then tell me what you think of this? At Tsinan I parted with my missionary friends and went on south alone to Puk'ou, passing through Suchow, Nanhsuchow and other famous towns. At Puk'ou, Japanese civilians and soldiers made it easy for me to cross the Yangtse, where a terrific storm was raging. At Nanking, a Japanese hotel porter greatly interested himself in my welfare, as you shall hear, and I came, alone, but in great comfort, to Shanghai on the Nanking-Shanghai Railway, and to my friends.

This is what happened to the party that went north to Tientsin. I'd been in two minds about which route I should take,

remember. They were held up for hours by a train that had been derailed by guerrillas They'd the stickiest time at the barriers that anyone had had for weeks, and generally got home feeling very sorry for themselves Who am I to write these things? What explanation have I of them? They continued to be, also, later such an astonishing sequence that my friends remarked on them I wonder if our fathers, who made the proverbs, were aware of things like this when they said, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." Was I that shorn lamb? Those who've read so far and know anything of the physical hardships of inland travel in China even in peacetime, will have realised that this was something of a gruelling journey Well, anyhow, I wasn't asked to bear burdens beyond what I could bear, and for the moment we'll leave it there The facts are accurate, at any rate, whatever you may make of the explanation.

The second story which those lads brought back from Tsinan was about some Baptist missionaries who'd been forced out of their stations. One day a special Japanese invitation was sent to them to return, and they went off in high spirits They were met very courteously at the station by a group of Japanese officials, who said, "We want to show you what the Chinese think of you" They were conducted first to their hospital compound, which had been stripped bare, and were then taken to the church, where a howling mob was waiting for them. In the crowd, however, were kindly, welcoming voices of people whom they recognised (The Japanese were not very good at the language of the so-called coolies) Thus, naturally, was not on the programme. They were then asked to sign a document to the effect that they'd been courteously received and as to what they'd seen This they did and returned to their base

There were quite a lot of similar stories of "spontaneous" riots at this period The Japanese, who were not then Britain's declared enemies, should have done this sort of thing with deaf-and-dumb men Missionaries have a habit of knowing the language moderately well. That's why, to the Chinese, they often seem almost human. Well, I've little complaint to make myself I tried to treat the invaders as I would wish to be treated, and on that and other journeys I fared fairly well at their hands That doesn't keep me from saying that their military methods were as stupid as they were vile What could be the sense of trying to win the favour of the Chinese with contempt and cruelty? They sincerely wondered



Carrying coolies, on the mountains of Yunnan, resting on their staves





why the Chinese refused to be friends It's the terrible truth that some of these saviours of the East poured oil over Chinese soldiers and set them alight, perpetrated nameless horrors on Chinese women, and burned down hundreds of villages The Chinese know, as I know, that this isn't and can't be true Japan, but you can't make friends with those who do such things That, and all it stands for, must be destroyed Our problems East and West are very much akin

As we went on our way, each station was guarded by Japanese soldiers There were pill-boxes all along the route At Suchow on the 19th I changed my money into "military yen," the Nanking currency If my memory serves me right, I started in Shanghai with National dollars, changed them for F R B for use in Tientsin, converted them into military yen at Suchow and back into National currency at Shanghai, and returned richer than I left, after spending quite a little When the vagaries of later Chinese currency have worried us, we did well to remember that it all started by the Japanese trying to "monkey" China's monetary system A note or two on the changing scenery may complete this section of the journey

"*Nanhsuchow, Kiangsu* We're passing through hundreds of miles of level, fertile plain, greener now than Hopei and Shantung, where there's so little moisture, and a little better wooded It's snowing hard and, once more, I've been wonderfully helped along the road "

"*Nearing Puk'ou* For the last two or three hours we've been crossing through barren-looking grass country The chief features on the landscape have been the block-houses and guard-houses at every station We've seen the almost complete destruction of all the villages adjacent to the line It looks as though the invaders intend to stay "

"*January 19th, 1940* Now, as we approach the Yangtse, we're passing through flatter and more fertile rice and wheat lands, with numerous tree-marked villages This is like getting back to the 'good earth' that China always seems to me to be, the good earth and the people on it that go on, whatever the storms that rage.

"Mother Earth feeds us all when living and receives us all back at the end So, at the end of the day, China may once more absorb and digest an alien race This earthlike fatalism and imperturbability is the weakness and the strength of this patient and now ever-queueing people "

Two memories I carried away from north China. One was of the neat wooden memorials to the fallen Japanese soldiers. The other was of the queues of Chinese; queues at stations and bus-stations, queues for searching, queues at Tientsin barriers. Wait till John Chinaman is free again, I thought. Then see what he does with his queues. But he was so numerous. What else was the invader to do with him?

Oh, you housewives of England, you at least should sympathise with the Chinese. Or do you love your queues?

JAPANESE RAILWAY AND NORWEGIAN  
FREIGHTER

“**W**e arrived at Puk’ou in a regular blizzard, wind and sleet. Once more, queues were the order of the day for passport and luggage examinations. I attached myself to a Japanese gentleman, who was friendly enough to share the luggage trolley, which he was using, with me and my things. He knew the ropes, and had us past the examiners in no time, and on the wharf for the launch. The Yangtse was blown into great rolling waves, and we weren’t through the angry flood and safely tied up at Nanking till it was dark. My wires to missionary friends didn’t arrive till days later, I heard, so there was no one to meet me. There was a Japanese hotel porter there, and I put myself in his care. He piloted me to the old Hsiakwan Hotel, which was standing, with all its fittings and conveniences, pretty much as the manager, Mr. Blagdon, had hurriedly left it two years before, as he took refuge in Shanghai. Meanwhile, the Japanese had taken it over and were running it in two sections, Japanese and Western. My fellow guests to-night are all Japanese, civil and military, and not a crowd of either. So last night, at Tsinan, I was in a declining German hotel. To-day I’m in a British inn, and can have a hot bath and clean sheets, after last night’s berth on the train, interrupted, as it was, by the necessity to be on the cold platform at 7 a.m., exchanging my money for military yen.”

I thought the “boys” were Japanese at first, for their heads were barbered with a Japanese cut; but, in the privacy of my bedroom, they cursed their new masters, on whom they were living till liberation came. Doubtless, they were minding things, too, in the interest of their master. Chinese servants are very loyal to those for whom they care.

I was called at 6.30, breakfasted at seven, on January 19th, and reached the station at 7.20. Luggage examination followed and then the queues—always examinations, always queues these days. It might have been Paddington or Waterloo in wartime. My Japanese hotel porter knew the ropes and the people, and I was dismissed to the head of the queue, being a foreigner, by a wave of the hand of the examining policeman. As we stood

waiting, another soldier came up, a very different proposition. He wanted to put me through it all again, gesticulating and brandishing his weapons My friendly porter put that all right, and then remarked to me *sotto voce*, "He's crazy" So the Japanese are not all alike We were soon past him, and took our seats in a beautiful saloon car of the Shanghai-Nanking Express The attendant was an attractive Japanese damsel, dressed in a fur-lined Chinese gown, and her first task was to arrange the flowers at the end of the apartment As soon as we'd started, a dainty little waitress invited us to breakfast

My fellow travellers were two or three Japanese gentlemen in Western dress, evidently of a very different social order from the great majority of my fellow travellers until then, who'd seemed to be hard-bitten lower middle-class, commercial folk

I saw nothing of Nanking except its wall, but I wondered, as I thought of the appalling doings in that city at Christmas, 1937, which, after all, was the worse the horrors of that time or the permanent subjugation of all the country from Nanking to the coast, with its railways, factories, mines and peoples, which was then the plain intention of the invaders

As we sped through Chinkiang, Changchow and Soochow, with their pill-boxes and guarded stations and damaged buildings, I read the slogans in Chinese "Establish the New East Asia Order," "Save the Country with Peace," "Smash the Communists" North of the Yangtse there had been other slogans "Set up the Methods of the Reconstruction of East Asia," "Let China and Japan co-operate," "Establish Peace in East Asia," and, just once, "Yellow Races, Unite!"

They all meant the same thing The tiger was wooing the lamb. All the station names on this British-constructed Shanghai-Nanking Railway had been in English and in Chinese The English names were now all obliterated For the rest, "the earth with its spring wheat, its graves, and its brown, winter grass looks much the same as ever Yesterday and to-day I have seen more cock pheasants wandering about than ever before" We reached Shanghai only half an hour late The last part of the journey was through the terrible devastation of Ch'apei, largely the result of China's "scorched earth" policy At the Shanghai station there were queues and inconveniences again, largely due to muddle and Japanese incapacity to handle such masses of humanity R. and B. met me with a car, and "after tea we went to see *Hollywood*

*Cavalcade* at the finest cinema in Shanghai, and for a couple of hours we forgot all our sorrows, troubles and burdens in the pure enjoyment of one of the best films I've ever seen " As I summed up that part of the journey, I found myself recording of north China words about "the unconscious heroism of the missionaries, their wisdom, patience and perseverance in well-doing " Doubtless, the understanding reader will have learned that for himself Here, in the comparative peace of Shanghai, under pressure of urgent messages from England, I was to plan and worry Japanese officials for permits to get to Ningpo, Wenchow and Hankow, and all in double-quick time I was also to meet a gathering of folk from all the areas visited or to be visited It all most wondrously was achieved, and I was back in England within ten days of the date appointed, with another few weeks in Burma to my credit as well

It would be tedious to describe the meetings and the conversations and the arrangements that went wrong, only to come more right again, that made up the experiences of the next four months Apart from the manifest presence of the Japanese and an occasional scare, with the uncertainty of their intentions, Shanghai seemed to be much as usual, and even more so Its famous Nanking Road was crowded with well-dressed and care-free women and men Its shops were teeming with goods of every description Its cinemas were crowded to capacity It was a refuge for rich and poor evacuees It seemed all so wealthy compared with the plains of Hopei and Shantung or the long, bare railway journey from Tsinan to the Yangtse Anyway, I'd no time to spend on its amenities I must get to Ningpo, and that without delay So, not caring to wait for the uncertain arrival of the regular coaster, I went on board a Norwegian freighter, S S *Haidah*, and found the captain willing to let me travel down with him Her hold was chock-a-block and her decks were stacked high with merchandise There was no passenger accommodation, but a certain Mr Li and I were allowed to share the tiny saloon. A half-drunk officer talked to us till he and we were tired. Then he must have gone and had some more For he and his mates disturbed our slumbers quite a bit, chasing one another across the saloon till the good captain finally shut them into their cabin and put the fear of the Lord into them We made a good passage across Hangchow Bay, and anchored outside the boom with which the Chinese had closed the mouth of the Ningpo River Other

boats were lying there discharging cargo into lesser freighters and, with the help of Mr Li, I got a passage on a launch and finally reached the city of Ningpo about 4 p m, having anchored outside the town at six in the morning of January 26th

"We are lying in what is almost a lake to-day," I wrote at the anchorage, "surrounded by islands and hills. When there's a strong wind, it might be quite rough, for this is where river, sea and tide meet, and when wind is added there are a good many forces taking a hand." That night, at Ningpo, I was adding. "The rockiest time of all our journey from Shanghai was the mile or two from the S S. *Haideh* to the boom, which looked formidable enough with its palisade and sunken ships" Outside, I think those merchant vessels had somehow to square the Japanese. Within the boom it was still free China at that date. The Japanese Navy was said to be doing itself pretty well with a rake-off on these vessels and their cargo, a far more profitable business than mere warfare

Arrived at Ningpo, I found B, who had come hundreds of miles across country from Ch'angsha as interpreter to the men of H M S *Sandpiper*, who were wanted where their country could use them, beards or no beards. Some journey that C. was also there overland from Lingling. He was going home on furlough. The local missionaries were my hosts, and with them I spent three busy days and nights. The great Union School for boys and girls had found temporary quarters miles away in the hills. Schools were peculiarly likely to be a target for Japanese aggression. This one was left on V-J Day without one brick upon another, thanks to a Japanese cavalry regiment quartered there, and also to Chinese looters.

Ningpo is the city where Hudson Taylor began his famous career, and where the Anglicans had formerly a bishop, but other places had pushed past it into the sun. I was glad that it remained one of our headquarters. "For Ningpo remains an important centre, and the area still produces men of outstanding ability and leadership. Chiang Kai-shek's home is only thirteen miles away among these snow-clad hills. There've been two air raid alarms to-day of planes, near, but passing to other places. It's curious to be back in a bombable area again. For, strangely enough, this remains a part of free China and is the entrance to one of the routes into Kiangsi and beyond."

I'd the usual frank and illuminating exchange of views and

opinions with individuals and groups of missionaries and Chinese The Ningpoese are a vigorous, virile type Shanghai owes a great deal to their initiative What is true of the people in general was certainly true of the Church But, with all I had to do, three days was a long time on this journey to stay in one town So I was happy to meet that day Mr and Mrs H of the A P C He ended all uncertainty about getting back to Shanghai by taking me along to see the Chinese captain of the oil-boat which, the first time for weeks, had made its way up river that Saturday So it was arranged that immediately after an early Sunday morning service of hail and farewell, T, my host and I should go on board so as to catch the tide I met in Ningpo an Austrian refugee doctor working in the Baptist hospital He gave me a message to his doctor sister, another refugee, working in a London hospital Fancy being a link between them

*"S S Ningkwang, January 28th, 1940* We are anchored in the river for the night, and are due to leave about 3 a m to-morrow for Shanghai The Chinese captain has given us his cabin and taken to the bridge himself He doesn't seem to be able to do enough for us Here, under an island, are four quite sizeable boats waiting to unload at Ch'inhae, port at the mouth of the Ningpo river They are under Norwegian, German and Italian flags, and there's a tiny Japanese gunboat outside with his eye on us all" All those flags were neutral then, but I imagine he dealt with the Chinese merchants responsible up at Shanghai

*"Nearing Woosung, January 29th, 1940* We started at 2 30 a m, and were soon in rough seas This is a river, not a sea, boat As we rolled and pitched and swivelled and lurched and did all a good little 500-ton ship could do in the face of the monsoon, T remarked, 'This may be Providence, but we have to pay the price' To which I remarked 'No one who knows his hymn-book expects Providence to move in a straight line'" I added this note "There are ships, quite a few, unloading down there If this weather, which has caught us, is blowing into Ch'inhae, neither loading nor unloading will be possible at sea In any case the sailing of each and all was uncertain For the first time in six months these shallow oil-boats had been allowed right up the river, which speeded their unloading by days Passengers are not supposed to travel on these boats, but when I put my predicament to T's friend on Saturday, he immediately offered us his help The jigsaw puzzle all fitted together It may not be convincing

to others, but to me, after all that has happened along this journey, 'Rattenbury's luck' is just a confession of ignorance." All that I planned to do in Ningpo had been done, and some things that were not planned, and here I was back in good time for the Shanghai meetings. Who would not say "Law D?"

From the time that John Wesley faced the howling mobs of Britain and his preachers were reviled, stoned, ducked, press-ganged and otherwise persecuted, whenever Methodist preachers have met in their annual Conference they've opened the proceedings by singing Charles Wesley's poignant lines, "And are we yet alive to see each other's face?" Often in England, apart from the memories and the great tradition, I've wondered if these lines were apt. How we sang them as we gathered in Shanghai. There were men from Chao-tung: among the Yunnan mountains, where I'd been in September, 1939; from burnt-out Ch'angsha, where I'd been in November; from Hong Kong and Canton, which I visited in December; from north China, whence I'd just arrived. Others had rolled along with me from Ningpo. From Wenchow, which they said I'd never be able to visit, and from Hankow, that I'd not reached, they came. All their journeys had been through unusual difficulties in a time of war. Perhaps the greatest wonder of my journey was that under all the circumstances, they should all have gathered in Shanghai at one time. It's no one's business what we said to one another. Some of them have been to England and gone back since then. Some of them are still at their posts. Some have had long years of internment: and I returned to my job in London. The whole situation greatly deteriorated in the following year, with the Japanese attack on America and Britain. But in that gathering we forged links of understanding and mutual confidence that have borne the strain of five harrowing years—links between London and China, links between Chinese and missionaries in their common troubles.

Nor were we solemn all the time. We found a Laurel and Hardy picture in one of Shanghai's cinemas and, though it wasn't up to their usual standard, we made the best laughter we could out of it and remembered we were human beings before ever we were Church officials.

In the intervals of the meetings, I paid visit after visit to the Japanese consulate, which had been set up in an appropriated hotel by the riverside. There I seemed to find the flotsam and jetsam of all Europe, either seeking favours or obtaining jobs from

the Japanese authorities For Shanghai in these days was the gathering-place for all pursued humanity If, in their extremity, they found unworthy jobs, as many of them doubtless did, what would you have done if you'd been one of the 15,000 Jewish or 20,000 White Russian refugees, to name only some? Like the importunate widow, I returned 'again and again, begging for a passage by air or river or rail, any way they liked as long as they took me swiftly and brought me back again I argued that if they saw my face often enough they would love it so much as to prefer my room to my company

The Japanese who dealt with me always seemed patient, polite and negative I think they dared hardly move except in accordance with their book of words The Civil Service at any time in any land can only go at its own pace In Shanghai in 1940, hampered by the military, the wheels of the Japanese Civil Service ground exceedingly slow I pressed for an air passage, partly to save time, partly because I knew that some American Seventh Day Adventists had been able to go that way, but mostly because I thought that if I pressed for the greater privilege they could hardly deny me the less In our China bargains we always "*K'ai k'ou*"—"Open our mouths"—at double the price, knowing that half that price will be a good bargain if we can secure it At last the matter was settled

"*February 11th, 1940* Mr Nagayama has rung up to say he's got me a cabin on the boat leaving for Hankow on the 13th or 14th, and would I call at 10 a m I guess I will, first to thank him and then to put to him all the requests of which I've thought since I saw him last Can I fly back? Can I, in any case, come by train from Wuhu or even from Nanking? In other words, can he help me return from Hankow in sufficient time to 'do' Wenchow and be in Hong Kong and away by air to Burma on March 15th?"

Optimist that I was

"*February 12th, 1940* I have my pass to Hankow, my vaccination certificate (the Japanese insist on a re-vaccination for travellers every three months), and a special letter to the Japanese Consul in Hankow, commanding me to his helpful care in securing a speedy return journey Mr Nagayama has really done me proud" I expect the good man rejoiced also that he should see my face no more

I'd been in Shanghai a fortnight It had been very full, enough and yet not enough to see all the people and do all the things that

were needful. Beside my missionary and Chinese friends from all over China, I had been seeing key people and facing major problems in Shanghai itself. It stirs me to read, after the passage of the years, the record of my friends' unbounded goodness. One note amused me at the time and intrigues me still! "Shanghai, these days, is 'full of a number of things.' Amongst them is the Buddhist abbot, Chao Kung. Having had his temple knocked about in the fighting, he now resides in the foreign Y M C A. This isn't as strange as it seems. For it's really a decent hotel for young business men and others about town. He wears Chinese raiment and a whitening beard and, in general, brings back to me the face and form of someone in England. The English name of Chao Kung is Trebitsch Lincoln, and I was told he was being watched. Anyhow, there he is in the melting-pot of the nations that is called Shanghai." Lincoln is said to have died there a year or two ago.

"*February 13th, 1940.* My next record will be written on board the S S *Singyang*. I've to sign all sorts of promises, which shouldn't be hard to keep, and be on board at dawn to-morrow. They say it will take ten days to Hankow. Anything less is sheer gain. The peacetime trip is four days.

"Little did I dream six years ago that I should ever see Hankow again, or meet my friends there this side of Jordan's stream. Yet to what a Hankow, Wuchang and Hanyang am I going? It's for the sake of a few people there that I go more than for anything else. Hankow's face and their faces will be sadly marred, but it's home, and they are my folks."

Up to the very last moment I'd been meeting friends old and new and receiving of Shanghai's abundant kindness. But good-bye, Shanghai. I'm off to Hankow. There's no place like home.

## XIX

### YANGTSE JOURNAL, SIX HUNDRED MILES OF RIVER

So at last I was making for home My first journey up the Yangtse had been by an old China Merchants' paddle-boat in November, 1902 This ship was sunk below Hankow some years later by that very rare occurrence on the Yangtse, a collision between steamers Often enough a Chinese junk came to grief, for the captains of those sailing junks found it difficult to gauge the speed of an oncoming steam-boat More expletives were used by steamer captains over junks crossing their bows than were thought necessary, even by those doughty mariners, in tying up their ships at a hulk alongside the wharf in the fast-moving summer river There were captains and officers as adept at lurid language as they were skilled in handling their boats, and that's saying much They'd certainly have developed an inferiority complex if they'd had the knowledge to understand the words of a Chinese junk captain in his wrath He had them beaten to a frazzle

How often since then I'd gone up and down the "great river," as the Chinese call it, I've no record, but the Yangtse was more familiar to me than the Thames is to most Londoners It meant so much more, being our essential link with the rest of China and of the world As that comparatively luxurious river steamer passed on its way, you stood on the bridge or lay on your long bamboo chair, lazily watching the panorama of life As you neared each port, you were full of expectation or reminiscence of the local sights and experiences Great clouds of wild duck would rise from the waters, as your steamer ploughed its onward way, or a flock of tame duck would be shepherded out of the way by the drover in his *hwa-tse* as he reached over them with a long, thin, bamboo rod Sometimes, especially in winter, above you would soar, in military formation, a flight of wild geese The usual formation was a V, with the point ahead and two converging lines of geese behind, all keeping perfect order At other times the birds would take up other formations, even more after the manner of flights of planes, with which our eyes have grown

familiar I suppose the birds are the natural teachers of all flying men.

You'd watch the heavy water-buffalo lounging down the mud banks or the cormorants sitting in a row on the gunwale of their boat ready for the next haul of fish. On the banks, at intervals, were the curious hinged nets that could be let down into the water for some time and then slowly drawn up again. How often have I seen the captives tossing silver in the sunshine as they struggled to escape. At the Feast of "All Souls" tiny little coloured lanterns with a candle inside went sailing down the river.

At Chinkiang hawkers boarded the boat or lined the hulk with their brass, pewter or lacquer ware. At Kiukiang the hulk was crowded with vendors of all sorts of pottery and porcelain. Each hulk, each port, had "small business men," "*siao mai-mai*," as we say, using every opportunity of turning an honest penny, and the larger the penny the better. The crowds and the yelling of the excited passengers at Anking were always terrific. Few boats called there and the consequent congestion was great. At Huang Shih Kang, near the Tayeh iron deposits, you boarded and left the boat in a heavy lighter, rowed by six or eight men in the prow. That means of embarkation, or disembarkation, was rarely so dangerous as it looked. The river steamers themselves had normally a luxurious foreign first-class, not solely confined to foreigners. Then they had a good, cheaper, less commodious Chinese first-class. The deck space of this was severely limited. There were cheaper classes, second and third and steerage—where the Chinese passengers were crowded together and were largely at the mercy of the so-called "tea boys." They judged a brief and uncomfortable journey to be better than the ease of a more protracted passage on a comfortable junk, with its occasional exposure to pirates. It's hard to police thoroughly so large a country as China. Europe, which is no bigger than China, has its difficulties in this respect; and America too. All that is dreaming of the past and perhaps forecasting the future. For these things are of slow and natural growth and will not change overnight even in changing China. But the journey on which I now set out was a wartime journey through invaded China, and on a Japanese transport.

"*The Japanese naval transport, Shinyo Maru, February 14th, 1940*" We got going at 7.30, after rising at 4.30, coming through Shanghai in a taxi, and being on board, according to instructions, at 6 a.m. One takes no risks of missing a boat these days. This boat was

formerly called the *Shinyang Maru* and is supposed to go right through to Hankow without a change

"Last evening, a whole crowd of friends arrived from England That was my one opportunity of meeting them

"I'd fretted at my delay, and yet, as it turned out, I couldn't have arranged things better had I tried It amazed me that I should have been able to meet them one and all "

Almost all of them were interned the following year, among them several newcomers Through the years of internment, I wrote them on the basis of that brief hour's meeting What a difference that "chance" arrival has made

We found that we were under a Japanese naval captain and officers, though the crew were Chinese The boat was full mainly of foodstuffs, which were put ashore for the Japanese garrison at each port It appeared to be not strictly true that the Japanese could be content to live on Chinese food alone Apparently they needed extras dear to their own hearts to make up for that which was lacking from their higher standard of living This I kept in mind during the subsequent years of fighting in and through the Pacific I think it may be found that Japanese, as well as Western, soldiers suffered no little from the absence, sometimes, of their accustomed diet

There were about a dozen of us foreigners altogether There was accommodation for many more So evidently we were the approved and privileged ones Instead of the crowds of Chinese passengers customary in peacetime, there were but a handful all told. As the war proceeded, there is evidence that the Japanese encouraged travel among the Chinese Foreigners, of course, were interned

Things just then were uneasy, and they were taking no risks

"745 Tokyo time or 'new time' I suppose it's convenient for our new rulers to work by Tokyo time, which is an hour ahead of Shanghai time, but it's only one more annoyance to the Chinese, one more reminder that they're under the heel of the conqueror The military are not by nature or training good peacemakers

"We were anchored for the night above Tungchow There are other ships anchored here too We don't travel by night and we don't know when we shall reach various places They talk of a ten days' voyage For the first time in my life, I shall be able to see every inch of the river For we only move in the daylight There'll be plenty of time for reading on this boat, for among the things

*verboten* are 'Drinking of wine, dancing and loud speaking' Fancy me doing any of these things anyway So what else can one do but read a little, sleep a little and eat what is set before you?

"*Above Chinkiang, February 15th* We passed the Kiangyin boom early this morning It was high tide, and nothing was visible We reached Chinkiang, with its beautiful temple-covered 'silver island,' about four, but only stayed long enough to be hailed by a launch and sent on

"On the top deck, it's been sunny and warm out of the wind My fellow passengers are a French lady with her little boy, a German business agent, three British men connected with shipping, and an Anglican, a Seventh-Day Adventist and a Y M C A missionary It's the laziest and most refreshing day I've had since leaving England Quite a good birthday

"*Nanking boom, February 16th* We reached Nanking at 10 30 a.m., and have unloaded delectables for the Navy and taken on stores for up-river" Just at that point we were called to tiffin, as is our Chinese name for the midday lunch, when, to our amazement, "suddenly the whole ship's staff, from the captain downwards, were ordered ashore for medical inspection and vaccination Everything was ready to start, whistle blown, engine-room bell rung and all, and then came the medical fiat Wouldn't Mr Bernard Shaw have been pleased? As all the food was in the pantry ready to be served, we helped one another through the meal and perhaps enjoyed it the more for that

"When the Chinese stewards came back they showed us their arms Some of them were covered with pricks They said this sort of thing was constantly happening It was no good remonstrating The Japanese port doctors were adamant Some of the crew had had a vaccination every voyage, and when they weren't being vaccinated, they were being injected with something or other It seemed to be a little way they had in the Japanese Navy This passion for ways of modern hygiene I have found on every Japanese voyage, at any time, to be entirely characteristic Is it just young doctors practising? Or is there rather a psychological reason for it? At any rate, some good appears to come, for modern medical science in Japan is outstanding for its bacteriology

"*Three hours above Nanking* It's only 5 30, but we're anchored for the night at a point where a Japanese freighter is loading iron ore Now we begin to see why the journey may take ten days It's not the slowness of the vessel, but 'orders' The river is strangely

peaceful and strangely empty of Chinese craft It's been a beautiful day It's all very restful, and I guess I'd better make the best of this holiday, that I may hasten later

*"Tatung, February 17th, 7 30 pm* When we passed Wuhu at 11 a.m., the victory balloon was flying, by which the general populace was encouraged to believe in a further defeat of their forces Silhouetted on the river-bank against the sky was a line of Japanese cavalry A little above Wuhu, we were cautioned to keep within shelter, and I judge it's there the guns were booming We were halted here by a gunboat an hour ago The quiet efficiency of this Navy is remarkable, and makes one proud of the mother who taught her

"The river is very beautiful in places of which I'd no knowledge before Half this journey is usually by night, and there are whole sections of the river that, after years of travel, I've never seen

*"Anking, February 18th* We anchored here at 1 30, and hoped to move on—in vain The sky has been overcast, so my sunburned head has had a chance to brown off before arriving at Hankow We'd the excitement of passing a recent wreck this morning Was it due to a mine? we wondered This city, as most along the Yangtse, seems very dead and inactive

*"Above Matung, February 19th* We've stopped twice to-day to deliver mail to gunboats and guard-boats on the way The boom at Matung looked a sad mess with its ten or a dozen sunken ships The 'little orphan' island still lifts its temple-covered beauty from the river, unmoved by the sufferings of earth

"To-day, as most days, we've been warned off the deck at times, as a precaution against gunfire from the banks 'Bad men,' they say, pointing to the shore Whether there's real danger or whether this is done to show the care of those who convoy us can only be proved by events We've seen nothing, but then you wouldn't till it happened

*"Huk'ou, February 20th* After supper last night, the weather cleared and we could just pick out Kuling's dark shadow in the cloud-filled sky Somewhere up there are the Rs, to whom I'm trying to get a letter Kuling is blue to-day instead of the black shadow that it was last night, and there's a great 'Sinai' cloud covering the whole mountain range"

The number of houses in Britain called Kuling must be considerable, and within you'll always find an old China hand to whom Kuling has meant life from the dead, health out of sickness,

beauty for ashes, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness It was for many years a paradise for all mothers and children It turned the Yangtse Valley from a death-trap to a fairly friendly residence Who can forget the flowers, the crisp air, the sunset, the picnics and walks and the sleeping of Kuling? Will it ever be the same again?

*"Kiukiang, night"* We reached here at 2 p m Navy men came and unloaded I admire the quick, quiet, energetic, efficient way they work There's such a snap about it To-day has done its worst. Bitter wind, heavy clouds, snow and damp in the air, and Kuling quite blotted out now Kiukiang strikes me as the deadliest place on a dead river

*"Lungping, February 21st, 10 a m"* Kuling this morning showed up glooming into the grey Its ridge was sprinkled with snow. From fifteen miles away I could see the valley, 3,500 feet up, where we used to go in the summer-time I caught a glimpse too of the Hanyang Feng (5,000 feet), where we used to climb, and remembered that Kunming, with its vast lake, was at that moment basking in the sun 2,000 feet higher still For two years of war, this haven of rest and health has been denied to my friends Neither clouds nor conflicts last for ever. Even now from Wusueh, thirty miles away, they will be lifting up their eyes to Kuling

*"T'ienchiachen, 10 a m"* We passed Wusueh two hours ago, looking badly knocked about and almost as dead as Kiukiang It's at T'ienchiachen here and its forts that the Chinese kept up resistance and guarded Hankow in 1938, until Canton fell so suddenly, and with it the morale of the other armies This stretch of the river is the most beautiful part of the Yangtse, except the gorges above Ichang, which are sublime and awe-inspiring rather than beautiful Here the river winds about among low hills, and the effect is frequently that of a land-locked lake, but there's always a way through. So the loveliest place has become the place of blood

*"Huangchow, 8.30 p m"* The weather has been superb since T'ienchiachen—sunshine, rain-washed clear air, mountains, river and sky, all praising God together The last hour or so we've been travelling by moonlight, though our lights were dimmed There's no guard-ship watching over us to-night, though there are three or four boats as big as ours anchored near one another. We've had the most perfect view of Shihhuiyao, 'The Lime-Kilns,' and Huangshihkang, 'Yellow Stone Creek,' that one could

desire Shihhuiyao, the iron and coal port, seemed as dead as the other places, for the iron is fifteen or twenty miles inland, and it's China New Year time (see *China, My China*, Chapter XXI) In 1902, here in a little temple turned steamer-office, on a cold and snowy morning, I'd had my first taste of China soup with dough balls floating in it and the flavour of garlic Five miles inland was the village where I spent the first year of my life in China, described in Chapter IV of *China, My China*

"Though I knew a missionary, S, was living alone in Shihhuiyao, I saw a Japanese flag floating above the school buildings At Wusueh there were missionaries too whom I'd little hope of meeting "

All of them, Ss and Rs, were interned in 1941, and are happily home again now

"It's been such a lovely day to close this long voyage with its varied weather and unexpected delays that somehow there's a sort of confidence to-night that, in the end, 'all's well '

"*Hankow, February 21st, 1940* Here I am in the old home again with old friends, H and B It took us about an hour to get off the ship The first person I met was Bishop G and then Dr C and Miss B We went off to the flat where Misses B and C were living, and from there to the Japanese consulate, where I was guaranteed a return passage on February 28th, but I'm pressing for a seat in the plane of March 1st instead Then we got in Dr C's car once more and he motored us to Kwanyinko—'Goddess of Mercy Temple' There I was, in the same sort of old rickshaw, pulled by the same sort of old coolie, going down the same old street, over the same old rickety roadway, with the same old luggage, as if I'd never left the place at all I've seen nothing yet, but a casual glance over all shows Hankow less disturbed and destroyed than any inland town I've visited "

Oh, what a home-coming that was "S W C and K C C have been in looking as hale and hearty as ever, and full of joy at the meeting We've sketched out a programme to cover all my working moments, if I go on the 28th, and we start with Wuchang to-morrow So here I end my first day in Hankow "

It was actually March 10th before I finally left As the busy days passed, I realised that there were Chinese and missionary friends on their way to meet me Travel, owing to the war, was unexpectedly difficult, and had I left on the 28th as planned, many of them would have had their toil, to end in disappointment

So I cancelled the passage so kindly provided by the Japanese Consul, and gave annoyance to the military folk in charge of the transport system. A profusion of apologies eventually put that right, and it's only fitting to record that in Hankow, as in Canton, Shanghai and the north, I was the recipient of much courtesy from Japanese officials who might have hindered me a good deal. My general judgment of them was that they were tied a good deal more by rules and regulations than their opposite numbers among the Chinese would have been. Let things go according to plan, and they were efficient and active. If things got away from the hook of words, they shrank from the responsibility of improvisation. I've fancied that in the Pacific War the same characteristics were discernible. The original sweep south according to plan was magnificent and irresistible. When the Allied counterattack developed on unorthodox lines, Japanese reactions, except to die in their boots where they stood, seemed rather ineffective. In *China, My China* I have described in some detail people and places in this Wuhan centre, the cities of Wuchang, and Hankow, the Hospital and the great Middle Schools, as well as the general life on the streets and rivers. These chapters formed the background of the scenes that now met my eyes. The Foreign Concessions were under the control of the Japanese Barriers, sentries and the flags of the Rising Sun were prominent everywhere. Wuchang was greatly ruined. Its Long Street was full of Japanese shops, with Japanese merchants behind the counters. The whole place was really one big camp. Our school, which had accommodated 300 boarders, was filled with 1,000 refugees, whose houses outside the city had been ruthlessly destroyed. In Hankow, life went on inhibited. The hospital was functioning, and even flourishing, under Dr. Rivers. "He's greyer and looking worn, quiet but in good form. He's won the admiration of everyone these two years."

Hankow's Rotary Club still flourished and, under a German Chairman, I addressed a company of Americans, British, Chinese, Japanese, Germans, and other Continentals on my "China Travels." One day I had a meal in the Bishop's house in the very study where Han Su-yin, of *Destination Chungking* fame, was married and, of course, I met the Sister under whom she worked in the wartime hospital in the Bank of China. There were meetings and welcomes, day after day, with Chinese and foreign friends. Here I met and talked with Miss Willow again and her stalwart British colleagues, B and C. It's sad to think of Miss Willow's

death from dysentery as she fled after the Japanese had brought her school to an end in 1941. All that I did and saw and said in that unexpectedly long delay of a fortnight in my old home would make a book in itself, but it would only interest my immediate circle. The Bishop was in touch with Agnes Smedley of the 4th Route Army, and was managing to get medicines to her through the Japanese lines. Yet, of course, the Bishop was just one of those missionaries she's so apt to condemn. "Tell them in England," was the Chinese message, "how grateful we are to them for sending you to us in our distresses. We pray for them in their war as they for us in ours. Come back and see us again in five years," was their parting word. When I replied, "I'll be dead in five years," "You're looking pretty well," they said, "and we think we shall see you back." Five years, they said in March, 1940. Their shrewd judgment turned out strangely true. It was great to be with them in their distresses and it's been good to remember so many of them in their years of suffering and internment. They know beyond a doubt how great numbers of British people have cared, and they don't and won't forget. So on March 10th I was aboard the *Murasaki Maru* making for free and bombed London. One story from Hankow must be related in the following chapter, for it's significant of many things.

## RUNNING THE BLOCKADE TO WENCHOW

IT seemed rather dreadful to be going away and leaving these old friends in distress of mind, body and estate Yet I wondered what I was moving back to. Would experiences in China be any preparation for the life to which I was now returning in the homeland? The night before I left, S's wife had turned up from England. But for the usual puzzling delays and upsetting of my plans, I should have missed her. It was a great satisfaction to see them united again and to know that ever since they have been together, even though interned, with their bairn, the desire of their hearts. How he needed her, this story will reveal. It was he who made it quite plain to me that the Japanese withdrawal from Hunan in November 1939 (see pp 138-9) was due to a serious defeat. It was he to whom that Japanese officer had told his story with tears. When the Japanese had advanced up the Yangtse in 1938, S had remained in Shihhuiyao, "the Lime-Kilns," just as missionaries generally had remained at their posts; for Japan was not then at war with Britain. Thousands of troops made that place their headquarters, and he eventually found himself alone in what was really a base camp for the attack on Hunan. Besides him there was a German, manager of the local cement works. This man was recognised by the invader as being in a group more friendly to them. Technically, of course, Germany was then neutral as Britain was. S. quite wisely had refused to be cooped up in the hospital. The school and chapel had been taken over by the Japanese for military purposes. I'd seen their flags flying over our buildings on my way upriver, and wondered why. Accordingly, he took his walks abroad to see the German, or just for a walk, or because he had need to consult with the Japanese officials. More than once he was handled and searched by the sentries, and had no easy time. Yet his courageous outlook and actions were sane, and he came to be recognised as a man to be let alone.

One day a Japanese officer arrived at the hospital asking for a morphia injection. The state of his arm showed that he was addicted to the habit. Partly because the church hospital was not a drug-shop, and partly for security reasons, he was refused. In that state of tension, it would have been a most dangerous thing

for the hospital to be accused of administering drugs to addicts. For drug-taking was forbidden by the Japanese for their own folk, and the Chinese could only smoke opium and other drugs in duly licensed dens. The officer was very insistent and, unknown to S, the Chinese doctor accommodated him to the extent of syringing him with water. He was soon back again, having realised the trick, and demanding the real thing. S heard of it, strolled into the dispensary and ordered the man off the premises. He left very angrily.

In a few hours another officer appeared, along with a Chinese interpreter. The interpreter and the officer, the latter with drawn sword, stood opposite S in his study. The interpreter was just in time to say, "Don't say a word," when the storm began. "You've offended the Emperor. You've insulted the Army," raged the officer with gesticulations and brandishing of his sword. The interpreter rapped out the translation, phrase by phrase in the same angry tones. The frenzied soldier raged and stormed for minutes, slashed above S's head with his sword, and thrust it between his legs. S stood his ground, quite silent, as directed, and let the abuse fall upon him. When the storm died down again, he apologised for any misunderstanding and said the last thought in his mind was to insult the authorities. Any other action would have made him subject to penalties. At last the interview was over, and he took his guest to the gate and politely said goodbye. He noticed that the whole place was closely guarded by Japanese soldiers with fixed bayonets. "How I bore it all, I don't know," he said. "I wondered what would happen next."

On the following day, still a third officer was shown in, whom he mistook for the visitor of the day before. "That man's mad," the new man said. "I've come to apologise for what you had to face. I'm very sorry. You've made an enemy, and there might be serious consequences. Happily for you, we're moving on to-day. You're not the only one to suffer. Plenty of us are suffering too. Look at these." He showed his raw hands, from which the skin had been burned by a strong disinfectant. This man had been set to clean out latrines for some misdemeanour, with this painful result. He told S other things of the hard discipline from which the Army suffered, and so they parted, fellow sufferers, an isolated Englishman and a Japanese officer. I'd been sure before, I was sure as I heard the story, I'm sure now that it's a radical mistake to classify all Japanese as of one type. They're human and various.

too. Perhaps, if Allied soldiers had known the Japanese language there would have been more and more easy surrenders. It isn't surprising that, after that experience and others of great strain too, S had arrived in Hankow with a severe attack of malaria. In his sleep he wandered again over his troubles, but he was soon his old self again. We let him go back to his station more happily, knowing that he wouldn't be alone. Who says the modern missionary has no adventures? And who says the missionary wife is unworthy of her man?

As I went downstream I thought much of the S's and wondered if the R's at Wusueh were in peace. Still more, I wondered about a Chinese doctor in a country station who'd been arrested by the military police. These police were the men responsible for the imprisonment and torture of Chinese leaders in a number of places. The regular army officers were helpless to control them. They seemed to be an independent unit, like the German S S troops. I'd tried in vain to secure the freeing of Dr T all the time I was in Hankow, and the local civil and military officials seemed to be favourable to our plea. It was obvious after a time that they had no power in the matter. A year or so later Dr T was released, not much the worse for his experiences. The whole story we shall hear some day. But it's a long journey for a Chinese doctor from a post-graduate medical course in Liverpool University, and all the amenities of English freedom, to incarceration in the hands of secret police on a charge of abetting the enemies of Japan.

The downriver journey was happily swift. On the first day we covered a distance that had taken three days on the inward journey. The S S *Murasaki* on which I travelled was a boat from Japan's Inland Sea, and was a nicely-fitted sea-going craft. My cabin companion was an American journalist well-acquainted with Edgar Snow and his wife, Nym Wales. He lent me her *Inside Red China*. I hoped she might have been "whiter than the snow," but was disappointed. As I read I remembered the comment of a Chinese in London on some would-be friends of China. It was a case of "Save me from my friends." Two facts that appear in this book are the influence of students in Paris and Berlin on the Chinese Communist movement, and the fact that practically the beginning and end of Communists in China were then students and officers rather than the masses. Much water has gone down the Yangtse since that book was written. The facts and the true perspective of the facts are obviously hard to obtain, but I cannot

but wonder if Edgar Snow and other writers had lived where I lived from 1926-34, if their books wouldn't have been written very differently I'm not sure, for Anna Louise Strong was in Hankow for a few months in 1927 I suppose the shape and colour of your spectacles have something to do with it

About a second book which the American lent me, I have no hesitation at all Lin Yu-tang's *Moment in Peking* I thought then and still think that this is the most revealing and truest book I've read on modern China It's in the traditional Chinese style and the "moment" runs to 815 closely printed pages The book grows on you and is very vivid at the end It really is the China of 1900-34 As to my doings on board, it's amusing to read "We don't wash in our cabins here, but in the general wash-room It's a little new to have a lady not my wife washing beside me, and a little cramping to one's style, but it's all quite natural In Rome you do as the Romans do—as far as you can" Two days later I was writing "I'd the experience of a Japanese bath this morning You soap yourself before you get in Then you sit in a deep tub up to your neck in the water and turn on the steam to any heat you can bear No, there was no attendant, thank you"

An Englishman lies down, a Japanese sits down, a Chinese uses a small tub, a Russian a tea-cup, I'm told The object is the same the method different, we all end up clean, presumably

So, reading and talking, I reached Shanghai on March 15th, still pressed for time, still determined to get to Wenchow if that were possible Letters from Wenchow told of the steamer by which the Conference people returned having been turned back twice by the Japanese and of having stuck in the mud in addition A thirty-six hours' journey had taken eleven days If that was how the local residents fared, what was a stranger from afar to expect? Anyhow, he meant to have a jolly good try Based on the kindly home of the A's, and greatly helped by R, I explored every possible and impossible steamer company, and at last "struck oil" at the office of Möller & Co

Möller was the only British citizen getting really rich out of this Far Eastern War He was taking risks, extending his fleet of coasting vessels, and pulling down his engineering yards and building bigger This was quite evident for anyone with eyes to see as we dropped down on the S S *Elsie Möller* from Shanghai to Woosung on the edge of the ocean I'd hardly heard of his existence before At this time of uncertainty, Messrs Jardine and Matheson,

Butterfields and Swire, and nearly all coastal and river steamers were either out of action or running very cautiously, but Möller's boats were full of goods, were running along the coast, and even from China to India. They couldn't guarantee me a passage, the agents said. The S S *Elsie Möller* was going shortly. If the Captain would take me, they'd no objection. That was his concern. I was willing to sign on as chaplain, or in any other capacity, if he would give me a berth to Wenchow. However, nothing of that kind was necessary. Captain Smith seemed very glad to have a companion, as the only other non-Chinese on the boat was a young Russian wireless man. So the Captain invited me to share his cabin, which was great and unexpected comfort.

I got on board at 3 p m on the 19th, hoping to sail at four, but the tide was too low to float us. We finally got off at eleven next morning. The ship was fast in the mud at first, loaded beyond the Captain's orders, and I wondered if we'd ever get off without unloading. "We're making good time now with the favouring tides. I've been on the bridge with the Second Officer, an Amoy Chinese, most of the afternoon, and am now writing at the Captain's table. This boat started life as a German, then came under a French company, is now British and, in its very old age, may be Chinese and then go to the scrap-heap. She's already thirty-six years of age and has done a spot of work in her day."

We came sailing down that familiar Chinese coast quite happily. At one point, we saw three or four boats which looked like Japanese trawlers racing over the sea. I realise now they must have been M.T.B. or speed-boats of some kind. In the early afternoon we were anchoring among a group of islands thirty miles from Wenchow. "We don't want to be seen," said Captain Smith. The Japanese, not having declared war on China (it was only the China "incident," you remember), had no legal right of blockade, but they were trying to hinder the use of Wenchow as a port, mining some of the many channels. It was said that Chinese fisher-folk amused themselves by removing the mines and disposing of the proceeds. The Chinese were far too thrifty to let mines go to waste if they could avoid it. The Japanese had a cruiser or two patrolling the neighbourhood. All these things were known to the coastwise shipping fraternity. There were obvious gains in evading this parti-blockade. The Captain had his prize money and something extra for the deck cargo. The shippers expected enormous profits, and Möller, the shipowner,

stood to win, anyway So there we hung about till 1 a m that night and lay at the anchorage at the mouth of the Wenchow River at 5 30 on March 21st "The Captain is now having a well-earned rest The Chinese military are searching the boat, at some length, and, in consequence, we've missed the tide I didn't take off my boots last night, as I didn't know at what point anything might or might not happen About 3 a m I went on the bridge and met the Captain, after watching the ship making the narrow passage between two rocks" It was all very beautiful in the moonlight "We're through," said he "But it was a near go At the narrowest point the helm refused to act It's a nervy business I don't know that we'll do it again We've come over a mine-field since then" Well, well, there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophies The Second Officer told me that this was the best trip they'd ever done Last time they took five days the time before they took seven The S S *Josephine Möller*, the other boat just in, had taken fifteen days, "having been turned back by the Japanese twice and run aground once" The entire trip, including tips, cost me 4s, English money Exchange was all in our favour then We were finally upriver and in the Mission House as dusk fell, and what a welcome we had from one and all The next day was Good Friday

This little port had become one of the main routes into Free China As many as seventeen boats had been in the river together She was handling more merchandise than any other port on the coast at that time It was here Joy Homer entered China on her remarkable trip, described so vividly in *Dawn Watch in China* Wenchow was looking as beautiful as ever, with its meandering river, its nine pagodas rising from the city hill, the river islands and the surrounding mountains Up above we could see the summer bungalows, perched on the mountain crest, where our friends lived in summer to avoid the torrid heat Through the city and countryside threaded the canals that make of Wenchow a sort of Chinese Venice There followed the meetings, discussions, problems, welcomes, of which the whole journey had been full The special difficulty was that only one here and there spoke any Mandarin that I could understand So we were reduced to interpreters in and out of that coastal dialect, never a very satisfactory arrangement, but we found it a good second best It was Easter-time, and on the Sunday evening, in the doctor's house there gathered a most unaccustomed congregation of foreign

captains and engineers, Customs men and oil agents and their wives, together with the missionaries gathered in that emergency port. How they sang. I think most of them had childhood memories, whatever had happened in the intervening years

We planned a picnic for the Monday up to the bungalow on the hill. Chairs coolies, sandwiches and picnickers were all ready to start when suddenly there came a message from Captain Smith that the S S *Elsie Möller* was leaving at 12 noon on the outgoing tide. I hope they had their picnic. I know I lost my keys and some of my unpacked clothes, and, finally, clambered on to the deck piled high with bales of cash-paper for worship planks, baskets of charcoal, crates of oranges and even a dozen young geese "I guess someone is making no little money." So we lay, down at the anchorage, three hours later, wondering how we should get through the blockade. We started again at 10 45 p m. with a good moon, took a different channel from the one by which we entered and were clear of the archipelago and into the sea by 1 a m. About 12.30, still in my clothes I went on deck to see how things were, and the Chinese quartermaster, pointing to some Morse lamps blinking behind us, said in a hoarse whisper. "Japanese!" However, we took no notice and went right on, accompanied by the *Josephine Möller*, which kept a little ahead of us. The Captain told me that it was an armed trawler. "I think he must have been asleep," said he "I saw him as we passed" What would you have done had he signalled you from ahead and not astern? "Gone right ahead," said he "He hasn't got our speed. There are three of them. One is faster and has a gun; the other two have machine guns and are slower." So at half-past one, we went to bed, and rose to a perfect day. "the loveliest we've had for a long time. Beautiful sunshine, but not too hot, a quiet sea, but not utterly smooth; islands off the China coast all the way and a sense of perfect peace."

We reached Shanghai on the 29th, having done the round trip, including parts of five days in Wenchow itself, in ten days. It seemed like a fairy tale then: perhaps it was. All I know is that I had accomplished my task, seen and talked with missionaries and Chinese and noted their emotion that Britain had cared so much as to send this stranger among them in their hour of need. So it fell out beyond our dreaming and the only part I had taken was a certain persistent determination which, after all, was only the way I was made. "I've had some queer-looking angels on my

travels Red Cross doctor from England, a white Russian official, a wild American newspaper man and now this Captain Smith They don't look like angels, any of them, and would look odd in wings, but they were given 'charge over me,' so that my way was lightened and my business and problems made easy I've never been on the bridge before, and this voyage in the Captain's cabin has taught me all sorts of things I needed to know of coast life and its difficulties, loneliness and problems "

In Shanghai I had another three days of over-abounding kindness, preached in the famous Union Church on Sunday morning, March 31st, and was off to sea in the afternoon on the Butterfield and Swires S S *Wingsan* I'd been meeting and talking with illuminating people all the time, and on the ship there were others

One was a lady missionary from the north She told me of the activities of the Japanese military police who had arrested Dr T They'd made wholesale arrests, she said, had sometimes used torture, and had executed an old preacher Their object was to purge the air of anti-Japanese elements, and the international Church was evidently under suspicion There were stories here too of "spontaneous troubles "

The engineer of the *Wingsan* was a fellow churchman called L "He took me over the engine-room for an hour I've such memories now of engines for light and power, of condensers and oilers, boilers and stokeholes, of smooth-running propeller shaft, of nails and screws, winches and nuts, engineers, greasers, stokers and cleaners as tell me how involved is this simple business of turning a screw to drive a boat " Ask the B B C producer to say what toils and tribulations have to be endured before that well-known voice comes over the air, as naturally as if the speaker were sitting there beside you

We had changes of weather as we sped down the coast, wind, rain, fog, heat, but it was great comfort to travel in that splendid ship On April 3rd I was ashore again at Hong Kong It had been a wild night with the wind howling round, but we knew it would be the end of the fog Anything is better than fog at sea, or in life, for that matter "This morning the sky is blue and the sea flecked with foam and we are nearing port " It had been a very lovely ending to my trip to inland China.

## BOOK FOUR

# THE JOURNEY HOME BY BURMA

### I

#### BUDDHIST RETREAT, AIRMAN'S DISCOVERY

WE docked at Kowloon on April 3rd, several hours late because of the fog C and S were waiting to tell me that a seat had been reserved on the plane on the morrow at dawn A launch was ready to take me to the island of Lan Tao, where the boys' school from Fatshan had been evacuated After that, the leaders of the Chinese Church would be waiting for me with a feast There was some property to be looked over The missionaries would be prepared to sit up till any hour for a final gathering They hadn't included the fact that there would still be the final sorting, packing and weighing to get my luggage down to 50 lb and be ready for the plane at 5 30 a m. As I'd still some weeks of strenuous travel before me in Burma at the hottest time of the year, the Burma people were warning me beforehand. I didn't take all this for Providence this time, but went to Thos Cook's and cancelled the air passage For I didn't think God demanded such things of a human being, whatever man might plan C was a cunning bird anyway, and knew what I'd do. But he wasn't going to be accused by anyone of selfishly delaying my chariot wheels It meant a delay of ten days, though I was more hopeful than that at the time When they and all their friends were interned, I was doubly thankful for the longer stay among them. Hong Kong was very beautiful Surely it was one of the world's most lovely places

When all this was done, it was getting on for 4 p m. We got to Lantao after two hours by launch across the harbour and beyond We'd had to make a detour to avoid the mine-fields, and finally stepped on to a slippery path and climbed half a mile to an old Yamen, where, in primitive buildings, 200 boys and R. and his colleagues were happily carrying on. I was told that the boys would understand Mandarin, so gave them five minutes of that, but, not seeing many signs of intelligence, fell back into English, which C translated, and they understood



went over the On Lok Factory, where biscuits, sweets and ice-cream were being made The Manager had been to America to learn the use of the up-to-date machinery which he'd installed—a good example, this, of Chinese enterprise In China, you may get so accustomed to plodding farmers and coolies as to be quite unaware of the intellectual power and business initiative that is equally typical of the race This man was a keen Christian and a lay preacher, often standing in open spaces and proclaiming the faith that is in him "He has a special service in his factory for his 120 workers every Saturday afternoon "

I made further enquiries about this prostitute business in Hong Kong At one time I'm told there were 25,000 of them earning their living this way If this is only approximately true, what it means for the British Army, Navy and Air Force is too appalling for words I've been in London and all over England since then and have seen the V D posters on every railway station and public place Britain will go to destruction, victory or no victory, unless this horrid business can be curbed Is there anything that can restrain it except the Gospel of Christ and the Christian ideal of marriage and of sex?

I spoke in Mandarin at the Chinese Church on Sunday, April 7th My interpreter, an old Chinese teacher, had been at the gaol preaching to 1,500 prisoners "I don't know how it is," he said, "but out of four services a month, we Methodists take three and the other folks only one" That was his statement, not mine, and I set it down for the encouragement of others to good works C and the Chinese minister administered the Sacrament to between 400 and 500 people I wonder if this great monthly Communion Service can be paralleled anywhere else, in China or in Britain

The service started at twelve and we weren't through till two Then we went to a Chinese restaurant for a little food Our host was a man who, in his pre-Christian days, had five concubines He had put them all away, making proper provision for each and all One had trained as a doctor

I closed that Sunday with a singsong at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home They were lads of twenty-two or thereabouts, but volunteers rather than conscripts, from Wigan, Manchester and Devon, typical, I suppose, of the new armies Down below in the streets were waiting, for them and their mates, those attractive Chinese damsels Those who kept free from strong

drink had at least a chance to escape, I hoped, but what of the others?

Two days later we visited the Tao Feng Shan, where Dr Reichelt, author of *Chinese Buddhism*, has his retreat for Buddhist monks. It's on the top of a lovely hill with, as he says, a Norwegian fjord on one side and hills and heaven all round. He has a "pilgrim halt" for strangers, where they are given entertainment for three days, as in Buddhist monasteries and early Christian practice. Then he has a theological school for converted Buddhist monks. Visitors and students generally amount to some fifty or sixty people. There are Buddhist and Chinese features about the building and the furnishings. He has a little worship chapel in the shape of a Chinese *Ting Tse*, "temple summer house." Over the altar is a lovely sculpture of Christ with outstretched arms of welcome and, above that, a famous Danish picture of the Resurrection. The symbol of the Tao Feng Shan is a lotus flower, from which the cross rises, and everywhere lotus and cross are linked together.

Beneath the main school is a little chapel of meditation, Lien Hua Tung, "lotus cave." There they go for meditation, confession and absolution. Beside it is a little prayer cell for a penitent. He seemed much moved as he told us of the use of the Lien Hua Tung, and prayed there very simply and beautifully for us all.

He has travelled, and still travels extensively, in all Buddhist lands, and is a welcome guest in their temples and monasteries, as they are in his. His brotherhood of converted monks is now 150, and he says that, up and down, there are another 450 enquiring. He seemed to me an old man, and I asked him how old. "Sixty-two," he said, so I said no more.

It was a great privilege to have met him again and seen this new thing that has come out of the destruction of his work in Nanking twelve years ago. I wonder what has happened since 1941. Japan has not been at war with Norway, so, maybe, Tao Feng Shan has been little disturbed.

Bishop Hall of Hong Kong had built his own house nearby and is helpful and evidently kindly regarded.

"He's a lad, is this Bishop, always doing things wise and unwise. 'A great gift of God to China,' said Reichelt. He gets lots of criticism, as he deserves, for not all that comes out of his hat is wisdom. But he's making a bigger stir in these parts than any Anglican bishop in my memory." I know him much better now,

but will let those notes of 1940 stand I don't think he'll mind. They're true to-day as then, and he may be amused

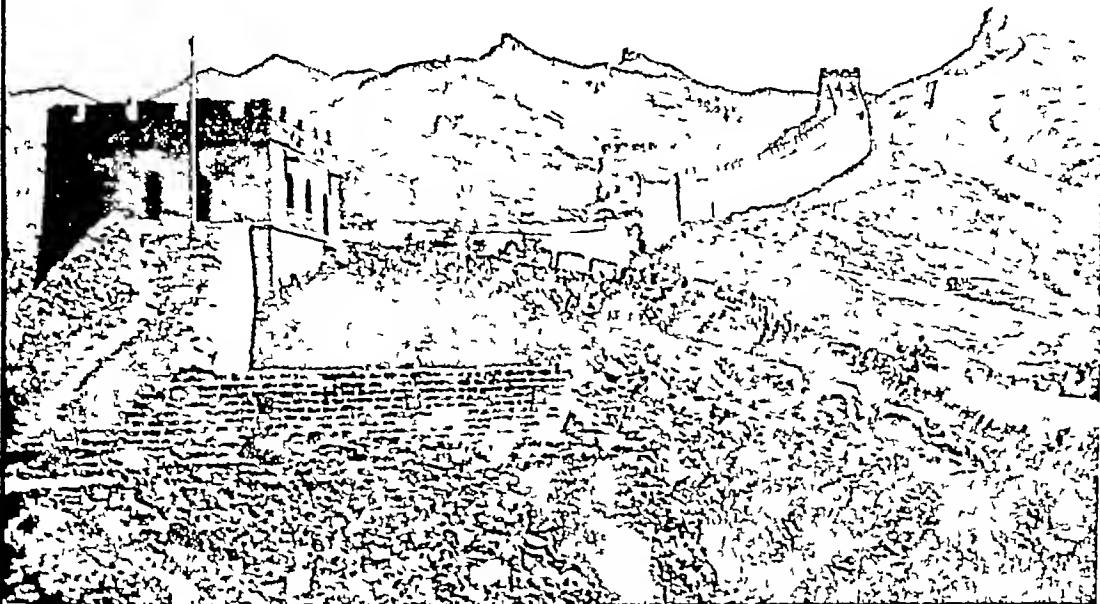
"After the Tao Feng Shan, we motored for another forty miles through this hinterland of Hong Kong, past the Governor's summer residence, back here again. The scenery, weather and company were all of a piece—a real happy and memorable afternoon

"Reichelt is supported by people of the State Churches of Norway, Sweden and Denmark. They are not an ordinary missionary society, I gather, but people more capable of understanding the motives, the methods and the results of this pioneer. He'll take his place in world and Chinese Church history when we are all forgotten."

I shouldn't have seen the Tao Feng Shan if it hadn't been for the fog on the China coast and the consequent delay of the S.S. *Wingsan*. How wonderfully things were working out.

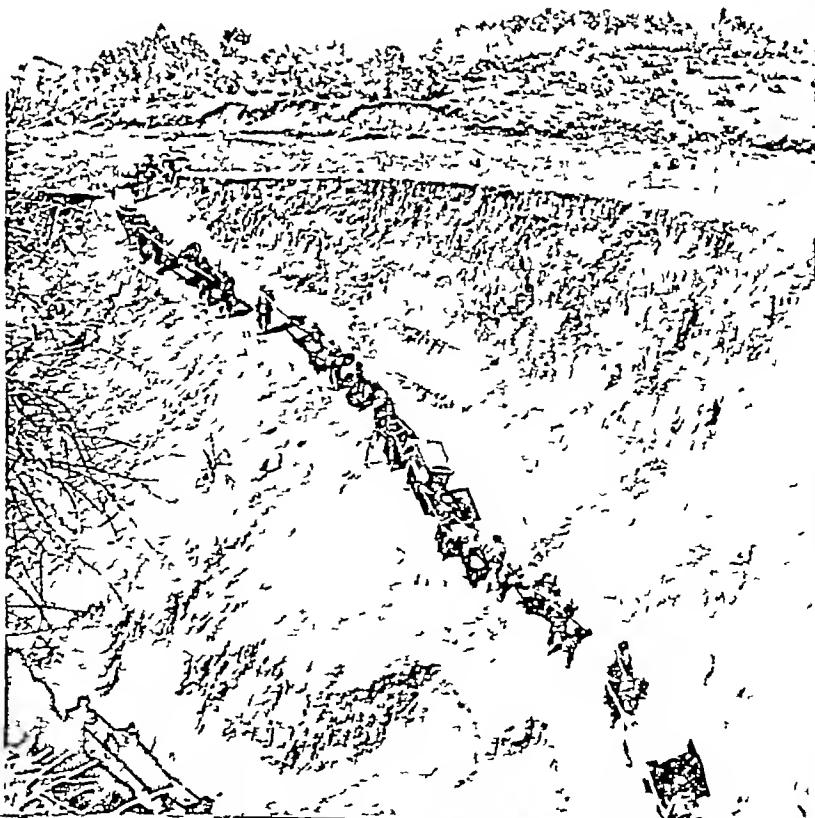
On this day came the news of the German invasion of Denmark and Norway, so I was glad to be by the wireless day by day. One of the deprivations of my journey had been the absence of reliable news. There wasn't much of any sort. In Free China, there'd been ill-printed sheets of flimsy wartime paper; but in peacetime, let alone wartime, no one relied much on the accuracy of the ordinary Chinese Press. In invaded China, you were confined to the Japanese version of things, and that was deliberate propaganda. In Shanghai the wireless was on the American commercial basis. The Nazis blared at you from one transmitter. An American, Clifford Allbut, warmed our hearts with his whole-hearted support of the democracies. The Church had its own Christian station. On the whole, you paid your money and took your choice. Here, in Hong Kong, it was Britain again, solid, stolid, careful, accurate—yet with a difference. It was the European broadcast, putting our case in the best possible light. Through all the remaining years of the war, I used to listen in England to that rather cynical-sounding voice at 10.45 p.m., grateful for what he'd done for me on my travels.

That night, April 11th, Hong Kong had a practice black-out. a new experience for me. One needed to know the roads pretty well to avoid sprained ankles in gutters. The Peak was quite blotted out. From what I'd seen at sea and here, black-outs on a dark night would appear to be very effective, I judged. A moon-light night might be different. I know more about all that now.



The Great Wall at the Nankow Pass North China

Cavalcade of  
chairs and  
carriers climbing  
the mountains  
Yunnan





Wuhan University, Wuchang, Hupeh, built during troubled years

Sea-faring junk  
off the China  
coast



I took out a British Airways insurance policy of 1s 6d per day per £1,000 to cover my journey. The maximum was £2,000, it meant 9s from Hong Kong to Rangoon. It was enough to encourage a kindly relative to push one over the top. It must also have been the Company's estimate of the margin of safety in their planes.

We visited the Kowloon aerodrome in the afternoon. There were several Chinese twelve-seaters of the China National Aviation Company which did the round-trip Kueilin, Chungking, Hanoi, Lashio, Rangoon. The British Airways two-seater machine by which I was to travel looked very tiny by comparison. The air-field was also a training school, and we saw a one-seater land gracefully with its Chinese pilot. What a revolution. On the water was resting the large Yankee clipper which I'd seen coming in that afternoon.

"I'm all packed up and ready to be off first thing on Sunday morning. I don't suppose much writing will be possible on the little air-mail plane, and I guess the diary will begin again in Bangkok. I started this China trip in uncertainty and end it in turmoil, but all between has been the story of mercies and blessings innumerable."

Mercifully, the future is hidden from us all. How little any of us dreamed of the calamities that were to come on Hong Kong on these sunny, glorious days. Of the next stage of the journey, this is the story, written at Bangkok, a few hours later on Sunday afternoon, the 14th.

"It's 7 p.m., Hong Kong time, and between five and six local time. So we've caught the sun up a bit, moving from the east, and got rather hot in doing it. We've been going all day, with but two landings, at Hanoi and Udorn. My sole but good companion has been the Chief Engineer of the Kowloon Light and Power Company. Now, I think, we must be sharing the best and largest bedroom in the Oriental Hotel, of which the manageress is an attractive German lady. There are a good many Germans here as well as Japanese. That may be the reason that the Thais are so strongly neutral as to be almost anti-Chinese and anti-British. They say our promises were not fulfilled after the last war. Thailand and Burma are next-door neighbours, and we need to keep that in mind. To-day's journey has had its experiences. We flew from Hong Kong to Fort Bayard, over the sea, at a height of 500 feet. Then over the sea again to Haiphong, striking a storm on the

way. We flew blind, in heavy black cloud and rain, with lightning now and then flashing around us. This was unpleasant; for you never know what lightning will do next. The captain tried to avoid it, and we soon found ourselves 100 miles away, right over the shore of the island of Hainan. We bumped along and eventually reached Haiphong, and then came down at Hanoi, which we found quite cool and pleasant. From Hanoi we began to climb through the clouds and came out on the top of a two-mile-thick bank of clouds at 13,000 feet, and we bumped along like fairies over this snow-like pavement with glowing heavens overhead. When we came down again it wasn't easy to find Udorn. The pilot's door burst open and we heard the captain ask his co-pilot, "Where are we?" Well, there we were, anyway. They spotted it eventually and we found it a very rural and bumpy place to land on. In a shed a sister ship was undergoing repair. "What has happened to that?" I asked.

"Oh, a whirlwind struck her as she was rising and tore most of that wing away. And then another whirlwind came and tore out the side of the hangar," said the captain, pointing to the patched-up shed.

It was very hot at Udorn, and kept very hot all the way from there to Bangkok. All the sky was thundery, and one could not but wonder a little about further whirlwinds. What miles and miles of mountain forest there were; and from Bangkok to Burma too.

That's my picture of the sort of country my son was fighting through in 1944-5. Any account that I've read of it makes me say that the half has never been told. We bumped along over the mountains at 2,000 to 3,000 feet, as we'd bumped along over the clouds 10,000 feet higher still, and at length arrived at Bangkok's lovely aerodrome, the finest on this route. We had, as usual, half an hour's motor ride, and here we were, all ready to go in the morning.

Travelling westwards, we were catching up with the sun, and the days were shortened. So we didn't rise till 6.30 and didn't have to leave our hotel as a rule till 7.30. This was an unexpected easement of one's journeys. My companion hadn't flown before, and he'd certainly had a good testing for the first day. For what with rain, heat, lightning and all, in a tiny plane, it certainly had been a day I told him. "It'll be a Rolls Royce tomorrow after to-day's Ford car." For the British Airways' seaplane of that date held about fourteen passengers, in addition to the crew of five, whilst our little bus had been quite full, with two pilots and two passengers. That day's diary reads "Have had

supper with to-morrow's captain and pilot They were very kindly folk The captain had been in Gambia and knew the Ts He'd also met over so many of my friends in England Both men are in the R A F and slowly making their way home They didn't seem so glad about this terrible victory in Norway as our to-day's captain and my 'good companion' I think they were nearer to counting the cost, 3,000 German bodies washed up on Swedish shores, the wireless says That brings the facts home far more vividly than eight or ten destroyers sunk Surely this war must end gangsterism, whether it ends war or not" So I listened to that caustic European broadcast voice and went to bed

My good companion was all over himself as we flew on next day in the plane from Bangkok "Fancy it being like this You might as well be on solid ground Why, there's everything here you want" There's nothing like starting with a Baby Austin if you are to enjoy a Rolls Royce as it should be enjoyed, I suppose I'd been badly mosquitoed all the previous night, and, as I didn't wish to disturb my companion's slumbers, I let them do their worst, killed them if they came too near and squashed one in the morning So even that hotel had had its drawbacks Bangkok's mosquitos are well known for their "piercing wit and active limb" "We're going along now at a steady 10,000 feet," I chronicled "But, as there's plenty of cloud and heat haze below, there isn't much to be seen but mountains and forests Yesterday we travelled at 134 miles per hour, to-day I guess it's 160 or so, but it feels no different I've just had a couple of sandwiches and a cup of coffee to keep me warm I'll be warm enough in an hour's time and for the next three weeks

"Now well-kept patches of fields continually appear, and we're travelling at a lower level They remind me of the old lady who looked down on the fields from Alderly Edge and remarked how cleverly the farmers had fitted their fields together"

I wrote that in the plane just over Moulmein, famous for its cigars, ninety-seven miles from Rangoon There we arrived at 11 a m It had been quite a short, non-stop journey I was still carrying in my mind something the captain had said to me the night before "I live in the New Forest," he said "Before the black-out, whenever we'd a spare evening, we used to run up to London to see a show Now we can't do that So we have to make the best of our neighbours, and we've been surprised to find what nice people we live amongst"

## BURMA OILFIELDS

WE came down, of course, in the Rangoon river. Lying a little below us were two bombers of the Australian Air Force. They were four-engined seaplanes, and looked very much like ours. Somehow the war seemed a long way from that river then, in spite of the watchful Air Force. S—the gallant S—was waiting for me. Soldier in the last war, parson and schoolmaster afterwards in Burma, what a price he was to pay for his missionary service! What a price so many of those I met on this journey have been called upon to pay! He's in India to-day, learning from the things he's had to suffer. There he was, hale and hearty and ever mindful of my needs. As we sped up the river together in the Airways launch, with the spray rushing past us, we could see the plane disappearing into the heavens, a plane, a bird, a speck, and so on to Akyab and Calcutta. To me she'd been for a few hours as solid as the earth. From her I'd gazed into the heavens above, the clouds around, and the forests and rice-fields of Burma beneath. Now she'd gone with the wind, and I was tying up to the Rangoon Customs wharf, piling into a car and making for the ever hospitable Ms. on this sultry day of Burma's hottest weather. I doubt whether I ever can get my picture of Rangoon right, for my base there was always in that kindly welcoming home on the outskirts of the city. Rangoon to me means sitting in that wind-swept bungalow, amidst the beauties of that well-kept garden, watching two Siamese pussies coming quietly in and out, listening to that caustic but enheartening voice on the European Service of the British Broadcasting Corporation, and chatting to my host and hostess and their mother of this and that, surrounded all the time by never-failing kindness. One, perhaps too easily, took all this for granted from one's friends, but to have such kindness poured on me, a perfect stranger, has raised my estimate of the many business and professional men in the Far East, of whom I'd known too little hitherto.

There were other Rangoons—the busy centre where were Municipal Buildings, offices and shopping streets, all blazing with tropical heat. There were the wide-spreading, park-like and well-wooded estates of the Judson College and the University of

Rangoon There was the Gymkhana Club, where British Rangoon had its social amenities and its exercise There were the thronged streets, where Chinese, Indians and about 120 other nations mingled together in that busy port, from whence the Irrawaddy steamers penetrated to Mandalay, and, ultimately, right up to Blamo on the Chinese border There were great yards, where hundreds and thousands of lorries were waiting to climb the Burma Road to the help of China in her distresses Yes, I remember Rangoon and its Shwe Dagon, and even its Zoological Gardens, but, most of all, Rangoon will ever remain to me the home of those kindly Cornishmen S and I were soon at the constant problem, how to see all there was to see of Upper Burma in three short weeks and not disappoint anyone who had been looking forward to the visit As our armies retreated in 1942, but especially as they advanced again in 1944, almost every place I visited came into the news, and most of them have been centres of fierce fighting I've learned, now that he's home again, to which of them my son came with his East African Rifles, but the battlefields of Burma, as of nearly all the world, were never far away from my journey by land or air

*“April 15th, 1940* We leave for Thazi by rail to-night, where we're to meet C at 8 a m to-morrow, and go on to Chauk and the oilfields” So not a great deal of grass was allowed to gather on this rolling stone in Rangoon at least All my other journal entries of that day were concerned with the fighting in the North Sea and in Norway It seems a far cry now, but then, and for the rest of my journey, it was part of my daily meat and drink At last the spring offensive had begun, and was it well with old England?

We breakfasted next morning in the Thazi Railway Station, where C had joined us along with F, the oilfields chaplain, and then motored the ninety-three miles of adequate road that separated Thazi from Chauk, passing through the road centre at Meiktila, which figured considerably in the Burma fighting of 1945 It was hot, but travelling in a private car over a road mainly good was a very different proposition from bumping along in a Chinese bus or lorry over an unmetalled road, whatever the weather I was feeling as though I could stand quite a lot of that

I hadn't seen the oilfields at Bahrein, only known that I was there and listened to what others had told me Here I was right in the midst of things “Chauk is one section of the famous Burmah

oilfields There are said to be seven miles of oil pumps There's a second and still larger section at Yenangyaung. In these two places were gathered several hundred British, American and other Westerners and a great many educated and skilled Burmese and Indians, besides the labouring people" The Scotch accent was rather strong, for Glasgow is the base of the B.O.C., as everyone should know.

At 6 a.m. next morning we were up for *chota hawn* This consisted of tea, bananas and light refreshments with which the Westerner begins his Burma day After that, before the sun was really up, we took a trip over and above these barren hills with their forest of pylons and oil-derricks. That's how the wilderness rejoices and blossoms as the rose these days So many oilfields are to be found in the desert sand I wonder if there's any connection between barrenness and oil. We called on Burmese and Chinese friends and an Englishman from Devon, who was to fly home on May 7th with his wife and child I imagine he just got that journey in in time We went into the little church, to seat 150, built by the B.O.C. for its staff, used at different times of the day for congregations of English, Burmese and Indians, in their own tongues It was refreshing to find the B.O.C. men quite broad-minded about this Such an attitude makes for goodwill among the mingled nations There didn't seem to be much of the colour bar in Burma, though racial strife in the previous year had been very bitter and bloody We had breakfast with the Rs "who live a little higher up and have a better breeze than we" The view of the Irrawaddy from their bungalow was most entrancing in the morning light. They had modern amenities, fans, cars and refrigerators "Life, even in this barren land, must be vastly easier than was formerly the case" Chauk had at that time some 13,000 people of all nations, of whom some 2,000 were on the pay-roll of the B.O.C., and the rest for the most part, I should suppose, living on them There were also three small rival oil companies One of the Chinese upon whom we had called that morning was "a Chinese store-keeper from Foochow who seemed to have an abundance of things in general He said his difficulty in business was that the Burmese didn't pay cash down He told me that there were thirty Fukienese, a good number of Cantonese, and twenty Yunnanese in Chauk, speaking their mutually unintelligible Chinese dialects, and adopting Burmese as their medium of speech He'd become a Christian since his arrival in the

country. His business looked both expansive and expanding He said that building and contracting were largely in the hands of the Chinese, who didn't, as a rule, do the work of labourers in these parts ”

With the exception of Rangoon, I didn't find the Chinese in large numbers in the places that I visited In Bhamo and some other centres they were said to be numerous They were scattered about in most places Many of them had taken Burmese wives They were quite evidently good immigrants, and the mixed families were said to combine the diligence of China with the charm of Burma, a very perfect blend The Burmese as a whole were a little afraid of this trend southwards of the Chinese, and wondered how far it was going to affect the independence of their country In earlier history, Burma had been for a time, a tributary state of China, and no one looked forward to any repetition of that For these reasons, the Burmese members of the Government hadn't been over-helpful about the Burma Road and the establishment of airfields which would link the two countries together Japanese propaganda naturally made the most of these fears

Since then Chinese armies have played a great part in the liberation of Upper Burma Whether that will make the Burmese more or less apprehensive time alone will show In the post-war settlement of Asia, there'll be at least as many problems to be faced and solved as in Europe if peace is to be permanent After all, the peoples of Asia are also men East is not really diverse from West in all the fears and sorrows, joys and problems of the human race

On the evening of the 17th I visited the Indian Settlement, where 140 sweepers, outcastes, lived "About fifty are Christians, always coming and going when they have made their pile We had the usual meeting Forty of them squatted on the ground and sang, beating their drum, clapping their hands and playing an instrument that looked like a long pair of tongues—what I supposed were Indian lyrics Some of them worked themselves up into an ecstasy This doubtless is indigenous, and the Church was wise to adopt it, but it's to be hoped that by and by some Indian genius will turn it into music," wrote this traveller from China in his diary He'd had his trials in China too Is everything else in the East to march with the times and music alone to be atavistic? In the Burmese preacher's house, we met a company of Chinese, Anglo-Indians, Chin policemen employed by the B.O C. and

Burmese men and women These latter, both men and women, are most charming and attractive There must be a sense of beauty amongst these people, I imagined The Chins are sturdy hill-folk, most pro-Chinese of all I met in Burma. They were largely used as soldiers and police and looked a well-built, sturdy people C interpreted, and it was like old times in China to be fanning as I talked It was the hot season all right, and yet I didn't find the heat so trying as Hankow on a summer night. I suppose it was actually hotter, but, as I noted, "not so sweaty." Kipling's *City of Dreadful Night* might have been written of Hankow, Wusueh or Kiukiang in July or August—but winter brought us cold and even snow So we had our compensations. Whether it was in Chauk or Yenangyaung that I met the airman I forget, but his word was unforgettable. This oilfield engineer had been an airman in 1918 In 1940 he was saying, "I suppose I shall have to go to the Air Force again before long. We shall all be needed. Soon, I suppose, we shall think nothing of losing 100 planes in a single battle" That was said at the time when we were watching the falling of every single plane with a sigh, as the Father of us all watches the falling of a sparrow

On April 18th we had a two hours' motor ride to Yenangyaung. The name means "Smelly River." So the Burmese must have known of the black ooze that rises to the surface here and flows into the Irrawaddy, by which you can reach Chauk in seven hours by steamer. We crossed the stream, which in high water is treacherous with sinking sands and had to be crossed with the greatest care in all weathers They told me of motor cars and bullock wagons which, having got stuck and failing to extricate themselves, had been sucked down and swallowed up alive I often wondered how heavy military vehicles fared at that stream in 1942 and 1945.

Yenangyaung seemed to be Chauk over again, but ten times more so There were more derricks, more houses, more dirt, more people, more heat and a greater opportunity. The view from the parsonage bungalow over the Irrawaddy was very beautiful, with water, trees, greenery, and above all the glorious sky. The landscape was broken with some of the never-ending Buddhist pagodas, all of the inverted-top type The Burmese must be very child-like to be content with so much of the same sort of building. One longed for the variety of China's temples and pagodas Yenangyaung is the original oil town. Chauk was the offshoot Both

operate along the narrow oil stream that apparently flows thousands of feet below these sandy hills and plains

The 3,000 or 4,000 oil-wells at Yenangyaung, with their pylons and derricks rising above, were, I was given to understand, unique in oilfields anywhere. Others will be able to certify the truth of that I merely report what I was told. Certainly it was unique to me to gaze upon such a forest of steel. The refineries are at Syriem in Lower Burma. The activities of the B O C I had noticed at various points on my way through India

My main interest was men rather than oil, and I was interested to meet another group of Chin policemen who spoke to me in quite clear Mandarin. So that it was hard to know whether they were Chinese from Yunnan or truly men of the Burma hills. Their appearance was definitely Chinese. There was no doubt of their political affiliations. The Allies certainly had some friends in Upper Burma when their grim task was on.

A gathering of oilfields' personnel in the grounds of the assistant manager was one of the most outstanding experiences of the entire journey. They were English, Scottish, Irish, men and women, living in the oilfields, and interested in many things. As we sat out on the cool lawns, within sight of the river and with a private swimming bath for the children nearby, they talked of their children, their religion and their various attempts at service of many kinds to the community.

"What we like about F," blurted out a Scotsman who had been silent up till then, "is that though he's a chaplain and his duty is to us, he goes out and cares for everybody. That's the sort of man we approve of." Perhaps it was the moonlight and the shadows that gave them frankness and sincerity as we talked together. As for me "I think that gathering of foreigners I met last night was about the most attractive group of such people I've ever met abroad." There were others of a different type, I was told, and can well believe, but I write of what I saw and heard. The total British colony at Yenangyaung, they told me, was 200.

All Yenangyaung and Chauk have been battle-scarred and twice destroyed since then, but it won't be long before that busy life is all active again. When Burma establishes her independent government, there will be adjustments to be made between the B O C and such things and the Government, no doubt. This is true of all the lands of Asia. It will be a new sort of pioneering for big business, as well as for the Church. Great Britain will need

the proper men for this sort of thing in days to come. It may be well to remember the Chinese proverb. "*Ho-shi fah ts'ai*"—"It's the pleasant man who gets rich." Well, we shall see.

On April 19th we were back in Mandalay, having come the 190 miles with a shade temperature of 100 and more. The car, of course, was not in the shade. What shade there was was inside. It was quite moderately warm, but bearable in a private car as long as the car was moving. These two or three days in the oilfields had been as illuminating to my mind as they had been warming to my corpus vile. Beside old Thibaw's city and amid Mandalay's flaming trees I rested and prepared for the next stretch of the road. A Burmese water-colour artist came in with some lovely pictures which are gracing the walls of British homes now. A wire came from Rangoon saying that the British Airways plane wouldn't leave till May 9th. That gave me more leisure and more time to see more people and things. We didn't waste much time.

"*Mandalay, April 20th, 1940* C is motoring me the forty-two miles to the hill station at Maymyo I shall have breakfast there, stay and look round a bit, and be back for the English service here at 6 p m. We're all feeling greatly rested and refreshed with a night in this mission house. It's some contrast to the travels and the heat in the oilfields."

Maymyo I found to be a rolling plateau of the Shan Hills where the Gurkhas and the Shans have their home. It reminded me a good deal of England, with its green grass and trees, but there were plenty of people to witness to the presence of tigers and snakes. So things are not always what they seem. I found the families of V. N. and S. all happy and well, and I thought it was strangely cool for a height of only 3,500 feet in this part of the world. Maymyo was military headquarters for Upper Burma and the Governor of Burma's summer residence was there, though it didn't enjoy the full pomp of the pre-independence period.

### III

#### SUMMER ON THE CHINDWIN

THE wind was to be tempered to the shorn lamb again. I had been warned that journeying in Burma at the end of April was hard on beasts and men, and I'd done my best to avoid it. As it turned out, I'd some of the coolest hot-season weather that anyone had ever remembered. Then they seemed a little disappointed that I wasn't enduring the worst. It was all right for me, but I really am prepared to believe the worst that any old hand in Burma has to say about his summer sufferings, for—

*"Paget M P was a liar,  
And a fluent liar therewith,  
And he talked of the tropical sun  
As the Indian solar myth"*

Everyone may know the well-deserved fate that happened to that elected representative of his people if they'll turn up their Kipling and read his tragic end.

Monywa I found to be a little town at the junction of the Mandalay-Lashio Railway and the River Chindwin. It was a centre of fighting in 1945 and suffered a good deal. We met and talked with H, later in the R.A.F., and Miss B, met his colleagues, including an able and attractive Indian schoolmaster and his wife, and looked over schools and church. We received a gift, to be used for China. This quite spontaneous giving of the Burmese for their friends in distress was almost as lovely to me as the beauty of the country and its people. Then, stuffed into the back seat of an open taxi, we made our way, under the burning sun and over the hot sand of the river bed, to where the S.S. *Saga* of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Co. was waiting to receive us. On the previous night we'd had wind, storm, rain, lightning and thunder for quite a time unusual in the dry season. "It's given us a cool night and a real cool start on this most trying of all Burma weeks of travel."

As we came along in that rattling old tin can of a Ford car, I couldn't help feeling how like China it all was, and, as in China, after various jumps and jars, it got you there in the end.

We had tea on deck, and then sat sweltering in the westering

sun, feeling much as you feel at Kiukiang on a summer's afternoon under similar circumstances This was followed by a sweltering night with the boilers of a neighbouring ship lying up against our cabin The water at that time of the year was very low and we didn't travel in the dark that night for fear of sand-banks Our ship, a fairly large one, of 1,000 or 2,000 tons, I should say, drew  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet when empty, and 3 feet or so when fully loaded

*"S S Saga, April 23rd.* We've just been aground taking a passenger on board from a little boat, but, with backing a bit, are now well away and enjoying our self-manufactured breeze again We've one fellow passenger, the Monywa manager of the Bombay and Burma Timber Co He's as friendly as other foreigners out here, is going off for a fishing holiday into the hills, and has a wireless set with him So we shall not yet be isolated from the wide wide world with all its troubles We're passing through flat and sparsely populated country The river has wide sandy spaces which are flooded in the rains, such as is the case with many Chinese rivers"

*"Sunset.* We've spent the last three or four hours trying to shift another Chindwin steamer, which we found stuck on the sand The Captain salaamed quite nicely as we came alongside He was grey-haired, dark skinned and looked the picture of dejection as he rested his belly on the railing of the bridge Every now and then he brightened a little, but apparently left all initiative to us It's the old story of overloading and someone making extra profits" We got entangled in his steering gear and broke our lower hand-rail, but didn't appear to have done him any good Meanwhile, our friend's wireless was working and we were in contact with Britain and the war So ended St George's Day, 1940, sacred, as the B B C had said, to Richard Cœur de Lion, William Shakespeare and Sir Roger Keyes Next morning we woke to find the other boat had gone off and a little launch was busy remarking the channel As soon as it blew the "All clear," off we went, following the new markings How often on the Yangtse had we known the shifting sand-banks alter the low-water channel overnight Apparently, on the Chindwin, the sand shifted too Then all day long, through increasing beauty, we pursued our way Both banks were wooded right down to the water's edge, and many of the trees had burst into fresh foliage in the hot weather Rafts of bamboo passed us every mile or so

The teak is floated down, we were told, in the rains when the water rises

All my life in China I'd never in so short a journey seen so many water-buffaloes as those we watched on the river's edge. This ugly, clumsy, timid animal seems to be the best helper of man in Eastern lands. Vultures were to be seen at intervals, huge, unseemly scavengers, immensely useful where great forest animals die in the tropics. My friends yawned on of cobras, hyenas, tigers and elephants. I'd to wait till I reached the Rangoon Zoo to feast my eyes on these and other indigenous monsters. I suppose it's the virgin or re-grown forests—jungle—that harbour these beasts of terror and of prey. In China there are too many people for large numbers of wild beasts to survive. Yet in the Chinese mountain country leopards, wolves, wild-pigs and a few tigers manage to maintain themselves.

Our Bombay-Burma friend was tinkering about with his wireless all day, and there in the mud and the heat of the Chindwin, in the heart of the jungle, we heard Chungking, Rangoon, Saigon and Australia calling. Women with white jackets and differently coloured *longyis* were everywhere to be seen coming down to the river for water, balancing one or two water-pots on their heads. Every few miles we stopped for passengers and fuel. The fuel consisted of logs of wood, which the men balanced on their women's heads, and so to the steamer. The women seem to be responsible for most things in Burma, including the control of their husband's money. Whether that makes for a strong and virile nation I must leave the pundits to discuss.

As the evening shadows fell, the jungle was lit up here and there with fires—a simple method of fertilisation in a sparsely populated country.

Burma is charming, with every man and woman wearing a different-coloured *longyi* ("skirt"). I saw few *pongyis* ("monks") or pagados on the riverside. Such monks as there were were said to be non-political and friendly. Which means they were more Buddhist, for what have the followers of Buddha to do with anything but love?

"S S Saga, below Kalewa, April 23rd. We pushed on most of the night, guided by our searchlight, as in the Suez Canal, bumping occasionally on a sand-bank, but very cool and peaceful. We woke this morning to find things actually chilly. The cooling off of the sand-banks must have had something to do with this. I watched

the sun rise, but it was as disappointing as usual. Those who get up so early have usually nothing to boast of except that they are up early. It's the sunsets that matter.

"We've just had 'This is Moscow calling,' and there goes Big Ben. So London, Moscow and Kalewa are all cheek by jowl."

Past the wooded banks past fishermen mending their nets pegged down in the river with bamboo poles, past bamboo rafts on which were huts in which the boatmen lived, we reached Kalewa at 10 a.m. just as the sun was trying to do his worst; but it wasn't too bad 'I want you to understand' said V.. "that this is quite an exceptional journey for coolness" We disembarked and found a bus waiting. a private bus, specially engaged for the twenty-four-mile ride to Kalewa and Tahan. It might have been a worn-out China bus by its general look of bedraggledness, but I admired the chauffeur. He was always cheerful and never daunted. If this screw didn't do the trick, then that one might. If these two wires didn't strike a spark, there were always other possible combinations. There was never a curse—our Chinese way. He always smiled and tried again "Hope is always," as a Burmese preacher remarked.

Apart from these little things, it was a glorious drive. I was given the box seat, and was fairly cool, and the twenty-four miles of woodland, river, sky and cloud were a dream. What my son, with his East African Rifles, thought of it in 1945 with a possible Japanese lurking behind every rock and tree, is another matter.

Halfway across we had a cup of tea in the Public Works bungalow, which could be occupied for 2 rupees a day. That's a heavy charge on a missionary's allowance: but it was very clean and nice. Before the days of cars, twelve miles was a good day's trek in this part of tropical Burma.

Kalemyo, which figured in the 1945 fighting, was in 1940 a neat little garrison town, and the garrison consisted of Chin police. We reached Tahan, three miles down a straight road from Kalemyo, in the afternoon, and Lushai women and children, some of them looking very thin, dirty and poor, crowded in on us. They shook our hands and murmured, "Lami" I was told to reply, "Dam-me." Which I did; but apparently it meant something quite pleasant.

The reason for this Chindwin trip was to see the Lushais and the other tribal people who'd come down from the hills to settle in the Kale Valley, which runs parallel with the Chindwin.

Altogether there were only 600 Lushai, the larger proportion of whom were Christians Their original home was in the Assam mountains There they'd been swept by a Welsh revival, quite literally The missionaries on those hills had been Calvinistic Methodists from North Wales, and the religious movement which they'd set going had swept along like the fires of the Welsh revival, as in Wales, combined with song For these mountain people, too, were lovers of music, and sang most beautifully Up there on the mountains it was a hard and hungry life First a trickle, then a mountain-stream of them found their way on to the richer plains

There they built houses, raised from the ground on stilts and grouped in a few hamlets and villages after the style of the Burman Being Christians, in each village they built a church and waited for someone to come and help. Calvinistic Methodists are Presbyterians, as you may know, but when they heard that there were Methodists in Northern Burma, the name was enough for them, and they were readily adopted into the Methodist Church of North Burma This is what I saw and heard that morning

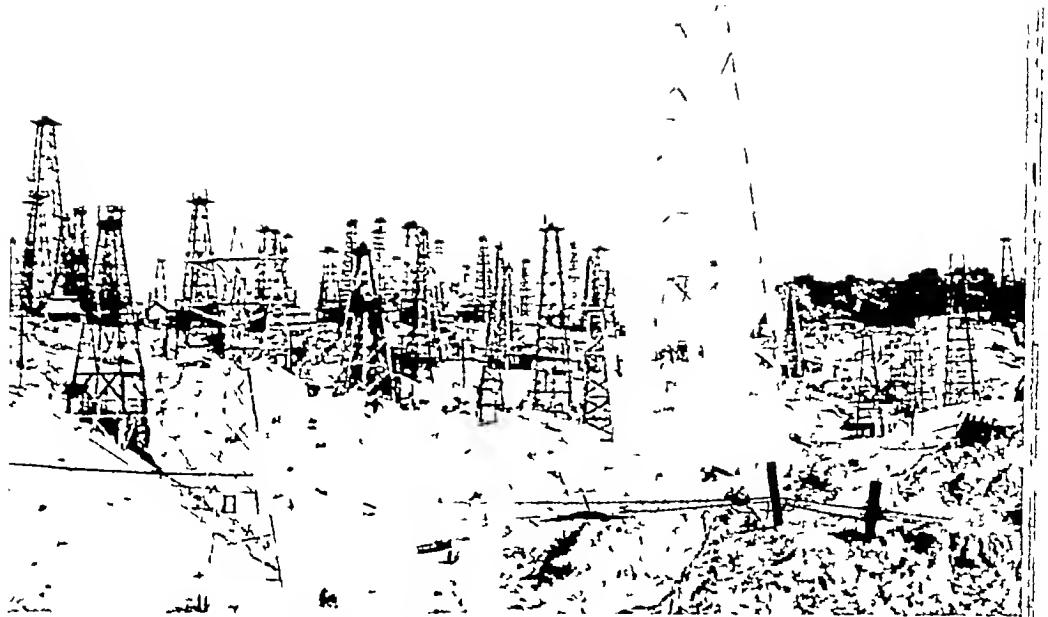
*"Tahan, April 26, 1940* This is the slack season for human beings Cocks and their following, crows and their cawings, and bumble bees all got going long before anyone was astir" And then "a whole series of women are passing along with water-pots on their heads, which will be useful for the missionary cook-pot and the missionary's bath It's a new form of 'water laid on,' and is brought from a well in the chapel plot, they say" Later in the day we went into a typical village home The front steps leading up to a house some 6 feet from the ground, were just a single tree-trunk with steps cut out with a hatchet and with no railing The house consisted of one fairly large room with the stove in one corner We found a group of people, men and women, a little baby, a white-haired grandad, no partition, no privacy One wondered how they managed for private things One wondered how they avoided fires in that light, dry, wooden structure It was all very primitive

The chapel was the same sort of thing, but larger and more elaborate The front steps were seven or eight tree-trunks, notched and placed side by side There were window-holes, without glass, which caught every breath of breeze that blew The seats were rough planks raised a few inches from the floor, In front of the

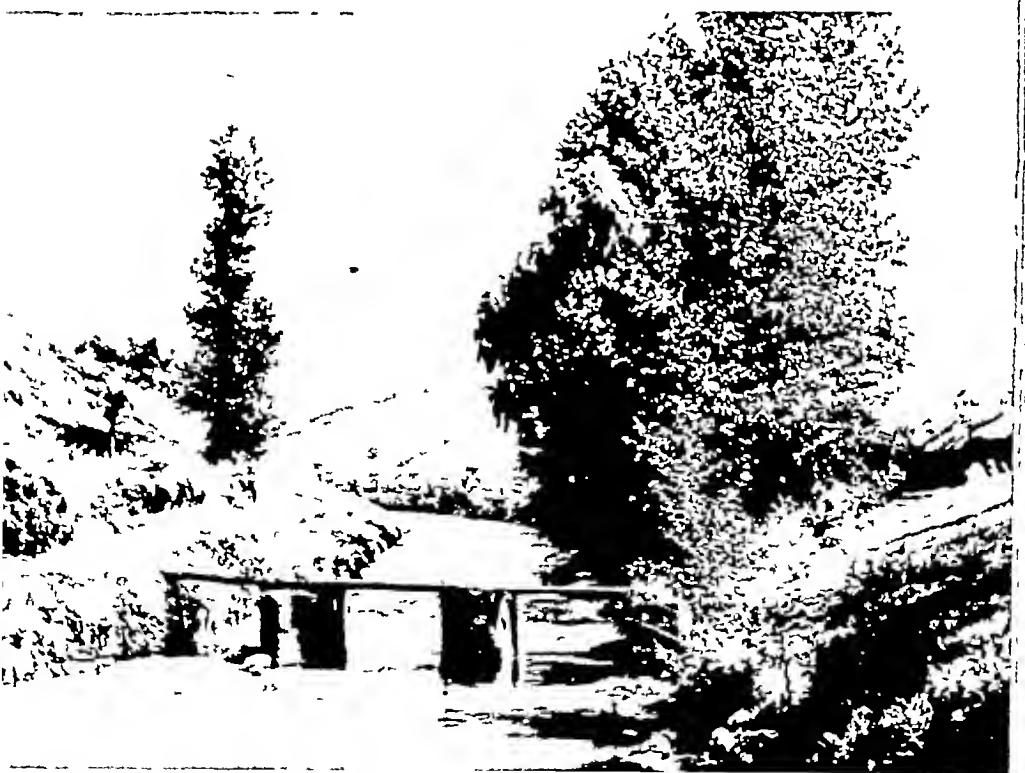
pulpit was a collecting-box containing gifts of rice. There was little money in the village and the gifts were in kind. There was, in consequence, quite a little granary of unhusked rice at the chapel.

Two things impressed me in the service—the praying and the singing “An elder called them to pray,” I noted, “and all began to pray aloud, very quietly and very reverently. It lasted only a few minutes and petered out with a woman’s voice.” Did God smile, I wonder, at that voice, last as usual? Or was it just as it happened? The choir sang a Lushai anthem about the crossing of the Red Sea. It sounded weird, but was more melodious than the Indian lyric I’d heard in Chauk. Later, to my amazement, they burst into the Hallelujah Chorus. In 1945 some British soldiers came into that village looking for food. They heard the bell ringing and joined the worshippers in that little jungle church. They couldn’t understand a word, but did realise there was prayer, reading and singing. Thinking to cheer them up, these British lads sang an old hymn in English, when to their amazement Lushai lips took up the Hallelujah Chorus. Some victory song that. They came away later with the gifts of the poor, and you may be sure they didn’t leave their benefactors empty-handed. Yet I wonder if the Britons weren’t the chief gainers, for they began to know in a new way what the old words of the *Te Deum* meant. “The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee.”

My short stay in that little bungalow, that cost £15 to build, was packed full of interest. A Chin visitor from 100 miles away came to see me. He doesn’t matter very much, but what he stood for does. There were other things in the Chin and Assam hills than a Welsh revival. I was told of travelling preachers appearing among the lowland villages, preaching with such power and conviction as to shake the villages out of their primitive superstitions and beliefs. Then, their work done, they disappeared, not to return, leaving behind them people all disturbed in mind and waiting for someone to lead them along a better way. That Chin visitor was the leader of those who tried to gather these perplexed sheep into the fold. It was a strange and thrilling experience to come across this sort of thing in the hills and forests soon to be caught up in world strife. The war has rolled on, but these things remain. I travelled among the three or four Lushai villages and Chin villages too, and spoke to them through interpreters. One



Forest of derricks      Burma Oilfields



Pastoral scene, Huaitseh, Yunnan



of the most beautiful things I've ever heard in my life came, all spontaneously, from the lips of a lowly Lushai woman sitting by the roadside at the end of such a gathering "Jesus came from heaven and was born in a manger," she said "You have come from England; we are the manger. Thank you for coming and for what you've said"

"May your Church grow till it fills all Burma," I replied

Our daily programme in Tahan, as elsewhere in Burma, was to rise early, do our main work or travel till breakfast at about eleven, and then lie down and rest till the sun was past its fiercest "It's quite unusually pleasant here on this veranda," I wrote at such a time, "with a sort of summer zephyr rustling the leaves and playing about one's face I'm sorry, for my companions sake, that I'm not at all as much aware of the great heat as of their abounding kindness and care How V smiled when he saw me really sweating this morning, as I moved from one village to another

"The village is very still just now Almost everyone is in out of the midday heat From this veranda one sees a man here or there going about some task, a dog with lolling tongue, a chicken pecking hopefully in the dust, frayed and burnt banana trees spreading themselves like fans, a young coconut palm or two with bunches of unripe fruit Now as the world wakes again, laying hens are clucking, cocks are crowing, children's voices calling, birds chirping and insects humming Over all the sky is a dull heat haze Last night I heard the '*K'uai k'uai shao ho*'—'Quickly, quickly light the fire'—a sort of Chinese cuckoo that called every summer across the fields as the cuckoo does in Britain"

April 28th was Sunday, and we joined some 300 men, women and children in worship The service was short and the singing good, and the place gay with the plaids and the amber necklaces of some of the young women Girls will be girls They seemed to have given up the practice of the older women of piercing a hole in the lobe of each ear and then stretching each hole till it was big enough to carry almost anything

All tribes of Burma, as of China, are distinguished, like the Scottish clans, with diversity of clothing On the hills of Burma, as of south-west China, there's an ethnologist's paradise waiting to be studied and enjoyed. Why, I wonder, have so many different peoples and tribes come out of humanity's boiling-pot on those mountains and spread in so many directions? Some of the

things that happened to the Lushai in Burma were of human interest. When they first came only one child per family survived, now they calculate their living children number three per family.

They're progressing, socially and economically, and agreed when questioned that it would be well to learn Burmese. Actually, Burmese villages were interspersed amongst them, but to the Burmese the Lushai continued to be counted as lower stuff. Pride of race seems to be very deep-rooted in most of us. Perhaps originally there was something of self-preservation in it.

Time soon passed, and we had to tear ourselves away and, after a perfect journey, were back at Kalewa, spending the night in the resthouse of the Bombay Burma Timber Company.

"Had this been China," I wrote next day, "we should have spent last night in all the liveliness and busyness of a Chinese inn instead of in this quiet, secluded spot. There are arguments both ways."

"Heaven for atmosphere, hell for company." It all depends which you desire. Kalewa was a very lovely spot where two rivers met and the mountains broke back. As the sun rose, in the morning, it was a case of

*"The opening heavens around me shine  
With beams of sacred bliss."*

Kalewa was bombed again and again in 1945. I don't remember that there was really much to bomb. It was, however, on the road to Fort White and Assam. From Tahan we could follow with our eyes the road that led up there. Well, peace has come again now, thank God, and the Lushai are going on with their singing and their work.

By 11 a.m. on April 29th we had boarded the S.S. *Sima* and were on our homeward way.

Some of the passengers who got off at Kalewa were Indian *fakirs*. Some had beards and matted tawny hair. All were naked but for a loincloth, and were smothered with ashes. One man's face was almost hidden under dust, except for his eyes. It was all rather repulsive to me. Were any of them spies, I wondered? What a thing religion is with its 100,000 Burmese *pongyis* in their saffron gowns, its Indian *fakirs* who deny themselves no self-torture, its Lushai with their dress and their singing and its missionaries "doing the Chindwin in the hot weather."

Of the story of the downstream journey, the following notes are all that need be recorded

"It's been lovely coming downstream alongside these wooded banks, with spring foliage on half the trees and the others still dry, waiting for the rains 'It wants to rain,' they had said in Tahan, but the rains were still slow in coming 'The rains are coming,' said the trees "

The commonest form of boat on the Chindwin was the hollowed tree-trunk of a canoe that carries its boatmen paddling and a fair number of passengers One associates these things with primitive savages, but the Chindwin Valley is the land of tall trees Nature has provided This is far the easiest way of securing a boat that will not warp and does not need caulking and nailing There are, of course, larger craft with sails, but I've been describing the ordinary local boat But for our necessities, should we be sailing about in hollowed tree trunks too?

*"Maukkadaw, April 30th* This is a famous place for fruit, and a whole string of women meet the ship with baskets on their heads filled with bananas, papayas, and tomatoes, whilst other women, with loads of wood upon their heads, have refuelled the ship Men, women and children bathe in the Chindwin whenever it strikes them to do so, thus passing rapidly from work to play, and from dirt to cleanliness and back again

"Did Burma invent mixed bathing? This was very easy to do You jump into the water with your one garment and just slip a dry one on and the wet one off when you leave the water The sun does all the drying Men and women bathed together, and children too, and there was no need of bathing machines A man is squatting there now after his bathe, his cheroot already alight "

The night was beautifully cool again One of our travellers had lived at Bhamo and talked of the large number of Chinese, seasonal labourers, there from Yunnan He handled the first American plane to be taken to Bhamo and flown from there to Chungking That was before the Lashio airfield was completed, of course

"The only other things that we've seen this morning, except children romping in the river, have been large-sized monkeys jumping from branch to branch of trees It was all a bit like Percy Dearmer's hymn This down-river journey is much pleasanter and easier than the upriver journey Our work is behind us Our companions are pleasant There isn't any wireless

and there are hundreds of restful water-buffaloes waiting for their work when the rains come, but suggesting peace and rest just now.

"It was 100 degrees in someone's cabin this afternoon. So my companions are getting more and more pleased with themselves in this matter of being prophets" In Tahan, V. had one afternoon showed me a thermometer at 105, but it had fallen cool at night and he proved himself a false prophet then

"We're about one hour above Monywa, anchored outside the S.S. *Sind*, the boat we tried in vain to haul off the sand as we went up. The resources of this little port must be overstrained trying to work two ships at once"

It was a warmish night, tied up at a place called Alon, but what does that matter if you're asleep? Our whistle went, and we were off for Monywa and breakfast before we went ashore, "Lest there's no other opportunity," said the pessimists.

So goodbye to Alon's teak logs and yellow-robed *bonzes*, sitting in the shade of spreading trees, and welcome a really happy cooling, ship-made breeze

"*Mandalay*, 6 30 We'd quite a cool and punctual railway run from Monywa. It's been very hot here and the people are looking a little washed-out. Now it has started thundering and, as I write, heavy rain is falling and cooling breezes are blowing" The prophets of woe had proved false. The journey had been easy "Well, here I am, back from the only portion of this trip that came near to 'tempting God,' better and more rested than when I started" No, I'm not claiming anything. I'm merely chronicling "You lucky dog," you say. So what?

## IV

### KALAW AND THE SHAN HILL TRIBES

**T**HERE was need to press on so early next morning after *chota hazri* we were soon spinning along in G's car to Kyaukse, Thazi and the Shan Hills

The church and schools in Mandalay were later to be in ruins. What the Japanese failed to destroy in 1942, our airmen demolished in 1945. The mission house still stands to-day in its lovely garden. The leper home survived the invasion and the retreat of the alien armies. The royal city of Mindon and Thibaw was the citadel in 1945 in which the Japanese held out tenaciously. I said goodbye to the coloured *gharries* and the tri-rickshaws with their "husbands for a little time," and to all the charms and beauties of one of the world's delightful cities.

We stayed at Kyaukse just long enough to have a look over the Industrial School and meet again some of the Karen teachers. Have I said enough of this great Karen tribe with its million people, a quarter of whom have been gathered into the Karen Church, for the most part under Karen leadership? Judson suffered horribly, but he didn't suffer in vain. He was one of the most fruitful ministers the world has ever known. Does that little memorial church in the swampy fields four miles behind Mandalay still stand, I wonder?

We had breakfast at Thazi Railway Station and were off again by 9.30 on the remaining sixty miles of motor road to Kalaw. Kyaukse, Thazi, Kalaw—how they echo of the war. What peaceful, attractive places they were then, especially Kalaw. "This place is a dream," I wrote on May 2nd. "I'm staying at the mission house with the Ls. Up the hill behind are two holiday bungalows, occupied now by the ladies and the Hs. In front is a garden with hollyhocks and lupins, lilies and all things nice—and the shout of little children. Below is the church, packed with an English congregation every Sunday evening, and nicely filled with Burmese in the morning."

The road from Thazi crossed two mountain ranges and followed the course of two rivers, but we didn't really begin to climb till the last twelve miles or so. No wonder determined Japanese resistance on that road slowed down the British advance.

after the fall of Thazi in 1945 As we mounted from the bamboo level, by and by to the pine-clad hills, cool breezes began to caress us, and we understood why 3,000 folk of many nations had made Kalaw a centre of health and happiness It stands 4,000 feet and more above sea-level, and was sufficiently, even sometimes oppressively, hot by day, but the nights were cool and blankets were welcome again As we entered the valley and made for the house, I saw that the five-day market was on So, lest I should be too late, after a handshake and a cooling drink, we were in the car again to see what was to be seen

There was a market-square, much after the fashion of many an old town in England, except that there was no surrounding Georgian or older square of shops In the open space were set up trestle market-stalls, and on them were arranged the country produce and the trinkets that always seem to find their way to markets, East or West Down the lanes between the stalls, purchasers and vendors jostled one another, and a busy trade was apparent everywhere I remember none of the things for sale so much as the mingled clans and races gathered in that Shan market town They pointed them out to me—Taungthus, Padaungs, Palaungs, Shans, Hindus, Burmese, all distinguishable rather by their dress than by the colour of their skin or even by their build “Each tribe has not only a different and different-coloured dress, but a different-patterned market bag in which to stow the purchases So to the Karens, the Chins, the Kachins and the Lushai I had to add men and women of these other races The amazing thing to me wasn’t that there were many tribes—I’d seen a great variety in Yunnan and Kueichow in China—but that they were all together in one place.”

These were the Shan Hills, and I’d only seen a sample of the tribes thereabouts Somehow, it was all a little akin to the mountain country of south-west China Chin sounded like Chinese Was there any connection? “Shan,” in China means hill or mountain Were these, perchance, mountain men from China? Was Siam originally the same word as Shan? Thai, the modern name the Siamese prefer to use for themselves, sounds strangely like Tai, a language group on the mountains and inlets of east China Was it just coincidence? Anyway, that market-place in Kalaw was and is a picture of the Burma through which I passed so hurriedly and superficially To me Burma’s a land where all the races of the earth—white, yellow, brown and even black—

seem to meet Whilst the races and tribes maintain their diversity, there's much mingling of the races too What's to come of our varied nations, colours, tribes and tongues now we're all so close together? Well, in Burma that day it was all very colourful, but in what does our unity consist? Just outside the market and at three or four points of the compass there were meat shops—on one side for mutton, on another side for beef, and on the third side for pork Moslems would avoid the last like poison, and a good Buddhist would avoid the lot But this was hill country rather than rich Buddhist plain-lands of the south, though into the hills the Buddhists had moved too with their faith and their teaching Amidst all these strange things, the most striking were the Palaung women, with several bamboo hoops round their waists Somewhere in these hills are women with elongated necks encircled with metal hoops, but I saw none of them

When I'd done with the market, I was motored over the roads of this park-like and beautiful hill resort Old Burma residents, officials and business-men, had fled from England's green and wintry land back to smiling Burma, and had built themselves bungalows at Kalaw surrounded by lawns and well-kept gardens They knew paradise when they found it They must have fled before the Japanese invaded or been caught and interned by the foe Will Kalaw in Burma or Kuling on the Yangtse ever be the same again, I wonder? War passes Peace stays Nature and men recover "This early morning is very beautiful with its blue sky, green trees, blooming flowers and singing birds, after a stormy night It feels something like Kuling on an August day, with a somewhat direcer sun "

I stayed there for a week, for Cooks wired me from Rangoon that the plane was delayed, and it seemed more sensible to rest in Kalaw than stew in Rangoon in the summer heat.

I visited the English School, presided over by two American ladies "This is a school for British, American, Anglo-Indian and other students All the lighter tints of the rainbow appeared to be there and there was no colour bar It is co-educational, and there are some ninety boarders and as many day scholars The buildings are excellent and the Government has given generous support, for the school evidently fulfils a real need "

We met and talked with missionaries of our own and other Churches. Among other people, I met friends from Rangoon

University and from the Government service, and was greatly interested in their forward-looking minds. They were at the centre of things and knew at first hand what students and officials were thinking. They all agreed, whilst in this land, where so many races mingle and there is so little colour bar, it was sometimes hard to say exactly where one race ended and another began, that out of Burma's 15 millions in the 1931 census, only 10 millions could be strictly defined as Burmans. The other 5 millions were foreigners of various kinds, and especially tribesmen, and that some of the finest and most progressive people came out of a union of races between the Burmans and those within their gates.

A day's journey to Lonpo in the Taungthu country, by way of Aungban gave me insight into some other things in the Shan country. Aungban, on its non-European side, was a bigger and busier place than Kalaw. Here a *sawbwa*, or chieftain, lived, and I'd hoped to see him. He had, however, been up late the previous night over the funeral obsequies of his mother. She, good lady, had been lying in honey for six months, after the embalming customs of those parts, and now the funeral ceremonies were taking place.

"People in these parts," I noted, "don't eat honey unless it bears the label of a quite reliable firm, as it seems to be used widely for the embalming of famous monks and nobility. Aungban is six English miles from Kalaw and, to my surprise, turned out to be the centre of a great potato-growing district." The Kalaw railway collects, in potato freight charges alone, 300,000 rupees per annum (£23,000). Failing to meet the *Sawbwa*, we pursued our twenty-five miles over glorious, rolling country of from 3,000 to 4,000 feet high. It was chiefly potato land, but here and there was rice. The whole was set among well-wooded hills and dales. Even the thickest population here seems sparse after China, and whilst we passed a number of Shan, Indian and Taungthu villages, we nowhere saw or met large numbers of people. Finally, we reached the village of Lonpo—"Rock Cow"—which consisted of some 100 houses and a market-place crowded every fifth day, as is the custom in the main village centres of this area.

The mission house stood a little apart from the village. It was near the road on open land, in contrast to the tree-sheltered street. It was built, Burmese fashion, on raised pillars and the 8 feet or more of open space beneath not only made an excellent

garage, but a cool and refreshing resting place, open as it was to all the breezes of heaven Above, the occupant was getting ready in 1940 to receive the Irish bride, whom, as the outcome of the war, he didn't marry till five years later, and then in Ireland. The house was roomy and healthy enough for two, with a spare room for an occasional visitor Like most of the mission houses out East, there could be no water laid on, with all that that means Such modern amenities come in time Meanwhile, when you consider the world as a whole, what a place it is for all engineers and plumbers to dream of The view in all directions over wide-spreading plains and valleys, hedged in by mountains, sky and clouds, was lovely in that sunshine What a home for a poet or an artist, I thought

After breakfast, we made our way across the fields to Lonpo itself The sun was doing its liveliest and V would have loved to see me sweat It wasn't much of a place to write home about a few streets of mat houses, raised a little from the ground, a market-place, a *pongyi* or two, a dispensary and a school-house The dispensary was one approach to the tribe and the school another In the dispensary the preacher lived, for there was neither a church nor a Christian as yet Opposite the dispensary was a little rest-house, handed over to us by the headman of the village, the people being very desirous for us to open a school for them

The old preacher had given up his job after eighteen years of fruitless toil there "He was the father of seventeen children, of whom ten survived and are a costly burden" So he hadn't been entirely idle He helps with the preaching on the market days, but it must have been a lonely and trying job before the missionary settled there Lonpo is on the edge of Taungthu country It was the only foothold we'd been able to secure There were said to be 30,000 of that tribe in that area Some congregation for one man, if they'd been keen to listen He was studying the language with the help of the ex-preacher, but without help of grammar or dictionary, for no such books were available Such is the life of a pioneer He was not disconsolate After all, he was only an hour or two by car from Kalaw Yet that young Irishman certainly had a job on his hands He became a chaplain in 1942, and thus, by the strange irony of things, remained nearer to the scene of his and their work than was possible for some of his other colleagues

Buddhism is making some headway in the Shan Hills, among the Taungthu as among the other tribes Buddhism is apt to be

regarded as the religion of the country. To be a good Burman is to be a Buddhist, they say. What strange arguments religion will sometimes use. As a whole, the Taungthu are animists, as the other tribes of Burma and China. There are some old stories and customs in the hills of Burma and of China that are strangely akin to Old Testament stories. It would be of interest to trace them to their source. I find noted in the diary: "One fact that has come home to me to-day is the large trade in opium smuggled into Burma from China, on which all who handle it make an enormous profit." I'd heard of this from the China end of things. Here, among the Shan Hills, there was plenty of talk about it. I wonder if Geneva has ever heard the full story of the traffic in opium. There are steamer captains on the Yangtse who could tell much from their experience. The trouble is that there's so much money to be made out of the pernicious business.

We came along home in an hour and a half over the same road. It was all different, for we were looking the other way. Our backs were to the potato fields and our faces to the wooded hills, now and again pine-clad and obviously health-giving.

Until May 8th I stayed on at Kalaw, delayed again and again by last-minute telegrams all dove-tailing in and enabling me to enjoy the loveliness for an extra day or two instead of waiting helplessly in Rangoon.

I was meeting missionaries and other friends. Two had come in from a country journey five miles off from the China border. Two others could not reach Kalaw in time, as they were holidaying at the ruby mines at Mogor. The scene from the breakfast-room of the Kalaw Hotel was very charming. "There's a beautiful flower garden that looks like England, and the view from the front door, across the railway by which I'm to travel to-morrow is like looking over English woods. Somehow there's quite a touch of an English summer's day, morning and evening, in these Burma hill resorts, but not in the midday heat, which is curiously oppressive." And so goodbye to Kalaw. The railway journey to the plain was excitingly full of colour.

"Myindaik, May 9th, 3 p.m. I am fairly off to Rangoon, have a carriage to myself and am so far fairly cool. This is the first station below Kalaw, and we've wound about among the hills, with the sun sometimes on one side of us and sometimes on the other."

"5 p.m. This rail journey to Thazi is much more interesting and cooler than the motor journey up. The valleys are open,

wide-spreading and wooded, except for the clearings made by the Shan villagers for their own tillage Every 500 feet or so we make a definite descent We come to a station and are pulled down one incline and then pushed down another, the engine being reversible Thus we avoid wide detours In two hours we have dropped over 2,000 feet and still have another 2,170 to descend before we reach sea-level

*"Lelyin, 1,557 feet* We are at quite a big clearing here The platform is completely shaded by two or three widespread 'flame of the forest' trees They make one huge splash of crimson among the greenery and the parched bamboos waiting for the rains

"What a panorama of humanity and of colour each station is Burma's women seem to be colour-blind in matters of sex So, in addition to Hindus, Chinese, Burmans and Shans, you have all the shades of skin between as well as all their varied, many-coloured dresses There are many stories of wild beasts, but I haven't seen one Perhaps there are other things I haven't seen in this charming land "

I reached Rangoon on May 10th having travelled through the night from Thazi A Burmah Oil Company official had been my friendly companion In the lovely home of the Ms I'd been listening to not so lovely news In Hong Kong and Bangkok I'd listened in to the story of Narvik and the invasion of Norway and Denmark Here, in Rangoon, we heard of the invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg We were to hear further details on our homeward journey But no one then dreamed of the overwhelming calamity that was to burst on Europe in the next few weeks These we thought were the opening blows of the contest We should soon find Britain, France and their Allies hitting back and hitting hard It was unthinkable that anything like the disasters of 1914-18 should happen again

On May 11th the rains arrived at last "I slept under a blanket last night and needed it There was a big storm in the night, and now it's both cool and sticky Churchill is Prime Minister and heads a Coalition Government So Hitler's done something for us anyhow

"In the zoo to-day I saw at last the denizens of the Burma jungle—quite a good show lions, tigers, leopards, elephants, giraffes, snakes and all the monkey tribes The high light was the rhinoceros, a vegetarian, who looked much like a man in shining armour "

So, with a service to a congregation of Chinese from Amoy, and with everlasting gratitude to the Ms., I said goodbye—or was it *au revoir*?—to Burma and took to the air again.

*"Airship Cameronian, May 12th.* It's 11 a.m. and we are 10,000 feet up between Rangoon and Akyab. It's rather lovely looking through the clouds to the rivers and fields below. The plane is full, including several ladies and one little child. A fellow passenger from Rangoon is a mother who tore herself away from her husband to go to England to fetch her two boys home to Burma. She hopes to start back on June 8th. What won't a mother do for love?" That's what we all thought of Britain and of Burma that day. How little we could foresee Britain, scarred and bleeding, never knew invasion. Burma, lovely Burma, overflowed with blood and burned with fire.

That homeward journey began and continued in great uncertainty, with the news getting graver with every broadcast. Should we be able to reach Britain at all by air, and what should we find at the end of the journey? we wondered.

## HOME AT LAST IN THE GATHERING STORM

AT Calcutta, my so-called luck was in again. In Rangoon, Cooks had warned me that I might or might not get on from Calcutta after two or three days' delay. They could guarantee nothing. Times were out of joint. When I arrived, I learned that a passage had fallen vacant. So I was able to go on next morning in the same plane, the *Cameronian*. What could have been better than that?

The Calcutta friends were kinder than ever, and once more, in the cool of the evening, I walked on the Maidan, admired the Cathedral and the Victoria Memorial and rejoiced most of all at the Children's Corner in the Sudder Street Church.

I found the war regulations very strict. My wallet of letters and diaries had to be sealed between Calcutta and Karachi. I had to get some more paper to go on with my diary, in consequence.

We returned the way we'd come. Yet a return journey is never the same as the outward journey. In flying, this is particularly so. Going east, we were getting away from the sun and the days were more than twenty-four hours. Going west, we were catching him up and some days were only twenty-two hours. If anyone stumbles at that, let him send a question, "on a postcard please," to the Brains Trust and see how simple they can make it. We weren't in the monsoon this time, flying at 2,000 feet. Quite a lot of our journey over India was at 8,000 or 9,000 feet, and even then we bumped a lot, to the distress of our child passenger especially, who, playing on the floor, took all the motions of the plane, to the detriment of her internal peace. When we came down at Allahabad and Gwalior, we found the weather terribly hot, whilst the holy lake at Udaipur was so shallow with the lack of rain that we'd to find another lake on which to alight. "All the earth is fearfully parched, and it's easy to see what must happen in India if and when the monsoon fails."

I reminded myself that, at the same height, I had crossed a pass in Yunnan on foot.

Apart from the crew and the child, there were eleven passengers—three ladies and eight men. We represented Australia, the Straits Settlements, India, Burma, China and Britain. All airways

are apt to be international, I imagine, for the journey is international

When we reached Karachi in the evening, G's wireless was none too thrilling. It told of defeat in the Low Countries and of German tourists pouring into Italy and of the demonstrating there of Fascist students. I wonder what those students are thinking now.

*"Airship Cameronian, May 15th* I slept till the hotel waiter woke me at 5.30, which was rather different from the fellow traveller, who waged an unequal struggle with bugs. He killed some, probably parachutists, and then finally retired to a couch and left his bed to the enemy for the rest of the night."

We began that day, going steadily over the sea, at a height of 9,000 feet. Six thousand feet below was a layer of cloud—white cloud on dark sea, like snow on ice. Above us was a deep blue sky, and the general atmosphere was in marked contrast to the torrid fires of parched India. At Karachi two extra passengers were added. So we were a full complement, fourteen passengers and five of the crew. We were to be still fuller before we reached Britain.

By 9 a.m. we were down at Jirwani in Baluchistan, "not much of a place for a summer holiday except for the sand which is there." Strategic, the outgoing skipper had called it. To me it was more of a place than it had been nine months before. We came next to Dubai in Oman, and one of the ground staff had had it on the wireless that the Dutch had given in. When we reached Bahrain a few hours later, there was "unofficial wireless" that all Americans and British were leaving Italy. So, as we flew west, rumours or dismaying facts rushed up to meet us.

When we reached Basra in the evening, the east-bound plane followed us in, its passengers being, for the most part, ladies. Families were joining up, I suppose. Then an Italian land plane arrived, on its course of Italy, Libya, Egypt, Abyssinia and Basra. This airport was then, as Lisbon later, a place where almost all the world could meet and see and hear one another's doings. We dined out on the lawns amidst those many-coloured lamps that attracted the insects and guided the late planes to anchorage. The news that night was that the Germans had occupied Amsterdam and that Dutch resistance had broken down. The intentions of Italy were, also, uncertain. I said to the captain, "We'll be all right to Alexandria?"

"Yes," said he

"What after that?"

"We're a long way from there," he replied

Next morning we got our itineraries. We were to refuel at Hammadiyeh, near Bagdad, have lunch at Tiberias, on the Sea of Galilee, have tea and dinner in Alexandria, where we were to spend the night.

*"Near Hammadiyeh, May 15th* Since 7 a.m. we've been passing up the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates. On our outward journey most of this was hidden in the dusk. To-day we've looked down on the 'Garden of Eden,' so-called Kut-el-Amara, famous in the last war, the massive monument called the Pillars of Cestiphon,<sup>1</sup> and, in the distance, Bagdad, city of mystery and story. We're now descending to this fresh-water lake forty miles from Bagdad. Motor cars, camels and flocks have looked like beetles and other insects below us. Goats have seemed no bigger than nits or fleas."

We had our usual motor run on the lake whilst the boat was being refuelled, and by ten were in the air again and off to Tiberias for lunch. The stretch between Galilee and Hammadiyeh had been very bumpy on the outward journey, and we'd flown at a great height for comfort. The homeward journey was very smooth. We flew low over the pipe-line from the Persian oilfields to the Mediterranean, and could make out encamped soldiers, black Bedouin tents, patrolling planes and cars. So, desert though it was, we'd plenty to see on the way.

It was as I looked down on that that the captain yarneed to me of Major Glubb, "the second Lawrence," as he called him, whose chauffeur he had been. "I hadn't learned Arabic then," said he. All the world knew of Major Glubb when the Iraki rising took place, and now, having done his duty, like the other Lawrence he has passed out of general notice again.

*"Over the Mediterranean* We've had lunch at Tiberias and there heard the news that the Anglo-French fleet at Alexandria had 'put to sea for manœuvres according to programme.' What programme, we wonder. Palestine looked very beautiful after the desert, and the Jordan Valley was flowing with milk and honey. We'd another glimpse of Nazareth, Mount Tabor and the snow-clad Hermon. By 4 p.m. we were skirting along the coast of North Africa.

<sup>1</sup> This is the great hall where Darius feasted his generals in his base camp for the attack on Babylon.

*"Hotel Cecil, Alexandria* The last thirty or forty minutes of our journey were very thrilling We passed Damietta and then the Rosetta Nile Then came Aboukir Bay, with the city of Aboukir and Napoleonic memories Next we flew along the entire sea-front of Alexandria, both port and palaces, and finally found the British and French fleets anchored in the harbour—battleships, cruisers, destroyers, submarines, seaplanes As we circled down in the midst of them, and dipped our ensign, crews lined the rails and stood drawn up on the decks of those mighty ships Decks were crowded, flags were dipped Such honour and such a sight I'd never seen before" Alexandria was filled with rumours of war. There were speculations as to what Mussolini was going to do "Nothing for the minute" was the general conviction Two of his best liners were out at sea and wouldn't be in port till Sunday This was Thursday So we judged, at the worst, that nothing would happen for a day or two My final note that night runs: "This is the hotel where all the intriguing is said to have gone on during the last war. It seems innocuous to-day."

*"Alexandria, May 17th, 1940.* To rise at seven seems very late after the last few weeks in Burma and on the way. After a good night's rest, I've been along the sea-front and have read the paper, looking for real news, and am still waiting to be called We have our troubles At lunch in Tiberias yesterday we heard a man at another table say 'This is where all that peace on earth business started' Poor man, he's taking home a stomach and upset nerves, but I shouldn't have thought anyone these days need be cynical about Galilee and Bethlehem"

At Alexandria we boarded our final plane, the S.S *Castor*, and the diary shall take us the rest of the way home.

"We're now 5,000 feet up, well on our way to Crete and Athens It's quite cold and we're all in cloth suits again We've changed into another ship, with a much younger crew. The commander is a man of great charm and attractiveness These air-fleet men are a new thing in a new age, and a pleasing and sociable discovery to all of us old travellers.

*"Suda Bay.* We reached here about noon and have been watching a huge buoy and float being disgorged from our plane to be sent to Crete's other airport, Mirabella It's meant a delay of over an hour, and we have walked along the shore with its blue sea and village-like street The Cretan agent told us that Suda Bay had, at one time, held seventy ships of the British Fleet

It's a sheltered harbour five miles from the capital and a much safer landing place than Mirabella" Who hasn't heard of Suda Bay now and the mountainous mass that is Crete? The total population is less than half a million Venizelos, a Cretan himself, changed the Turks who were in Crete for Greeks of Asia Minor, thus solving one of the world's main problems at that time

"*Hotel Great Britain, Athens, 5 pm* The journey from Crete to Greece, over these giant stepping-stones of islands, seemed very short, but, owing to weather conditions, we came down beyond Eleusis in more sheltered waters than the Bay of Athens. It was an hour's ride from here, and we came along on a marine road that ran through groves of olives. We've visited the Acropolis and the Parthenon again. I wonder if all the Greeks are as proud of it as I would be if I were a Greek. The same shark who raked in our shekels last time has done the same again. Fliers can't be choosers. You rush along and do things as you may."

Greece, even that guide, was wondering and bothered like the rest of us. The Hitler, or Charlie Chaplin, moustache was quite common in the streets. In the club at night, where we went to listen to the news, we were told that Greece's attitude to the war was quite uncertain. The British were popular with the common folk and Byron's was still a name to conjure with. Greece was under a dictator, Metaxas, and he would take the vital decisions when the time came. It was thought that he was pro-German, but quite definitely anti-Italian, and so we'd see what we saw. Happily for us, Italy attacked. This threw Greece into the arms of the Allies before many months had passed.

"*Near Corfu, May 18th* The papers this morning announced the fall of Brussels and the German crossing of the Oise. It can't be worse than that. This last hour has been the most glorious bit of the whole journey. At the start we passed over Greece, under sunshine and blue sky, and saw Olympus rising mighty, snow-capped. Now we're riding over a sea of cloud 8,000 to 9,000 feet and there's hardly anything beautiful in cloud formations we do not see, blue sky around and above us and the sun taking off the morning's chill. Amid all this beauty of cloud and heaven, it's hard to visualise individuals and nations at death-grips.

"*9.30, Italian time* We've left Brindisi, with its seaplane base, and are passing over the well-ordered south Italian plain, with its light green fields and dark green groves of trees, and its curious cupola-roofed houses in the fields and gardens. We're flying low

beneath the clouds and are able to pick out every detail By and by we shall have to rise and rock over the Apennines

*"Leaving Lake Brecciano, 12 30* After all, we came from Brindisi to Brecciano almost without a bump We seemed to be blown along the valleys with a good following wind We came quite near to Rome, to the railway station and the aerodrome, and could see, beside the spread of mountains, the great war memorial gleaming white Brecciano looked lovely as ever, but we were soon on our way, with three additional lady passengers, packed up in haste, for England

*"Leaving Marseilles, 3 20 pm* Yesterday there was a wind of 125 kilometres an hour, and nothing could alight at Marseilles So they've been pretty busy to-day with both days' planes It was rough work getting down on to the waves of our lake, and we had to be towed to the anchorage Setting off, it was by far the easiest take off we've had; just like getting up a kite against a strong wind It was common talk that no-one but an exceptionally capable pilot would have been allowed to try We're still a bit buffeted with this wind even now, but shall soon be crossing north of the Pyrenees to the Atlantic Coast."

Coasting along the Mediterranean, we passed near the great naval port of Toulon, saw several warships at sea and wondered how that part of France was faring At Marseilles we heard of General Gamelin's order of the day, a call to stand, "now or never." All our way home things had grown blacker and blacker

*"Biscarrosse* We reached this Bordeaux seaplane base in the late afternoon It's situated on an inlet from the sea, and to all intents and purposes it's a lake The country between here and Bordeaux is mostly covered with pine-trees, grown both for wood and for the sap, which is cupped from the trees like rubber.

*"Arachon, Nr. Bordeaux* We came the forty miles from the airport in a British airways bus, and weren't here till 9 p m So it's plainly been a day. Athens, Rome, Corsica, Marseilles, Bordeaux all in one day is plenty on which to meditate But all the way the background has been Belgium, France, Flanders, and may God protect the right. The journey from the Gulf of Lyons to the Bay of Biscay was fairly smooth going. All this part of France showed a pleasant prospect of fields and pine plantations, over which we passed.

*"Bay of Biscay, May 19th.* We've flown over Bordeaux and the Gironde and are now going north over a calm sea and have lost

touch with land We stayed at the Hôtel de France last night, served by the lame and the unfit for war Evidently France is using her manpower to the uttermost One or two of our passengers are full of complaints However, the agent was more than a match for them this morning A few weeks in England at war will make them more patient of things and folks that can't be helped

“Arachon is a quiet little place and lovely for a restful holiday But England, after 291 days of almost constant travel, will be good enough for me The Bay looks very well behaved from here

“9 45 a m We're beginning to cross Brittany and can see the harbour at Brest Along this coast the seashore and sandy beach make one think of one more place for a holiday The land shows up green There are plantations of trees The roads lead everywhere—but especially to England St Nazaire is beneath us now, and off we go across the mainland ”

Those English-looking fields and trees of Brittany were sadly torn in 1944 In 1940, war seemed very far away from them, even then

“10 45 We've just passed over St Malo and are saying goodbye to *La Belle France* The mist is round us, but through it, on the sea and on the shore, we've seen the Breton fishing-boats

“11 We see Jersey now and will be off to Blighty in five minutes. The sea is calm as calm can be

“11 20 We're passing Cherbourg and have left Guernsey, Alderney and Sark upon our left Over we go at last into the Channel, and then head straight for Poole

“11 40 There's a bank of fog over England, but we are slowing down and can't be far away Underneath us there's a tanker off for oil We've just seen another coming in Now we're heading for the cliffs of Bournemouth, gleaming white, with the Isle of Wight on our right, and here we are at 11 55 resting on the waters of Poole Harbour Home at last and in port ”

That was the end of this wonderful journey, except for home and rest However kind the whole world is, there's something over and above at home “So for journey and for journey's end may the good Lord be praised ” As we climbed out of the launch and up the steps to the jetty, a naval officer met us and said, “We haven't given you the reception you should have had It can't be helped. It's 'that ' ” “That” was a trawler or something from Holland

bringing refugees So that was the England to which we'd returned What would be our experiences next? You, who lived through the gruelling war years till VE and VJ Days came in 1945 can answer as well as I And now to one and all of you fellow travellers, "Goodbye." You'll fly yourselves some day, won't you? There's nothing like it on earth.

## BOOK FIVE

### CHINA IN THE FOLLOWING YEARS

I REACHED home at Britain's most tragic and lonely hour Within a few days of my landing, the King of the Belgians had become Hitler's prisoner Then followed the strange and memorable deliverance of Dunkirk, Mussolini's stab in the back to France and, finally, the complete collapse of our great Ally across the Channel Britain stood alone, with rail and road signs removed, with her new Home Guard drilling with broomsticks and dummy rifles, with her great leader telling the world that we would fight on the beaches and in the streets, that we never would surrender even if for a time we lost our island home It was the heroic period As the bombs fell over Britain and London burst into flames, "London can take it," "Britain can take it" was the note

As I continued my journey through Britain, telling of my experiences as a wanderer, sympathetic audiences said to me, "It's evidently been a moving and tremendous journey and you've had your great deliverances too But tell us what's the meaning of it all What about China? Can she really take it?"

In the summer of 1941 I spoke to perhaps the most knowledgeable audience in Britain, consisting of expert and experienced missionary leaders I knew what they wanted I was to strike the heroic note and tell them of a battle of China to match their own high purpose All that I felt able to do was to give them certain salient facts of my still unco-ordinated experiences in that year of travel, much as I've done in the previous chapters of this book There was a picture of a rapid journey under great pressure of time—a series of incidents and interviews that, interesting in themselves, seemed to have no relation to anything in particular When I was speaking, as when I finished, I discerned their disappointment The comment of the Chairman was "Cold-blooded" There was hardly a listener there who couldn't have made a much more telling speech with a tenth of my material, but it wouldn't have been true "China can take it" "London can take it" I wasn't really sure how much they could take in either case

I found myself one day talking to a Dutch officer in a railway carriage He told me how his unfinished submarine had, at the

last moment, managed to escape from Rotterdam and creep safely into England. How she was completed now and away to sea in the Allied cause.

"It's a good thing for us we had that ditch between England and the Continent."

"Yes," said he "It it hadn't been for the Channel, you'd have shared our fate"

Well, China had no delivering channel. The enemy were deep in Could she, would she hold out, and for how long? Of her potentialities there was no question, but would they ever be available?

On December 8th, 1941, the incredible happened Japanese officers were announcing everywhere to my recent hosts in China that they were prisoners. Almost overnight that "haven of peace" at Hong Kong had become a scene of carnage. By Christmas Day Hong Kong was lost to Britain and all my friends there were behind barbed wire

On the journey, my Chinese friends had agreed with me that when once Britain and America took a hand in the Far East, Japan's day of doom would have come Instead, America's Pacific fleet lay at the bottom of Pearl Harbour and Hong Kong was gone Calamity after calamity followed in rapid succession The Japanese swept on from victory to victory, according to her well-laid plan All Britain was amazed at the unexpected strength of our new enemy and apathetic to and ignorant of the place that China might play in the grand alliance of which almost overnight she'd become a member.

Fresh from the journey, my heart was stirred within me I was sure that Britain had got things all wrong I went to the B B C. and told them it was a more important thing to have China on our side than Japan against us If I felt that, would I prepare a script, they queried There and then I produced my broadcast on the "Greatness of China." Just on the eve of still more dreadful news, it fell to be delivered How well I remember my "producer" saying that night "The news from Singapore is very bad You've got to lift us up Put your whole soul into it" I put my whole soul into it, for that was how I felt and how I still feel Since that March night of 1942, other broadcasts have followed, and then books, every one of which has been meant to make the China of my experience, the China of my journey, and the China of my understanding live and move before my fellow countrymen.

I refused to rhapsodise when heroics were demanded, and in the day of China's greater sorrows and distresses I've declined to join the throng of her declaimers As her years of resistance lengthened, they were darkened too Isn't that almost inevitable in a long war? Wasn't it so with us?

When Britain and America collapsed before the sudden onslaught of Japan, I wondered for a time what the effect upon China's morale would be She stood up quite wonderfully under that blow to her expectations Her faith in Britain, America and Russia must have been very deep, but her faith wasn't in man alone

Perhaps the most dominant fact that I brought back from my journey was that conversation under a tree in the missionary's garden in Kunming (p 61), where I understood the certainty of the exiled poet and philosopher in the ultimate morality and sanity of the universe Optimism wasn't universal It flourished away from the Japanese rather than under their heel Yet, in various degrees, it was widespread and to be found among all classes and in invaded as well as in free China It was in invaded China that they'd said to me, "Come back in five years," in the belief that, by that time, their land would be their own, however ravished

It's been the internal rather than external troubles that have brought the dark clouds

In the spring of 1940 in north China, my friends had told me that F R B and Japanese military yen were instances of a determination of Japan to ruin China's currency Was it partly in anticipation of such a calamity that the Chinese Government in 1935 had adopted a "managed currency" and pegged the dollar? From the time of the Japanese invasion in 1937 to the end of the war in 1945, the Chinese dollar weakened and fell as low as 3,000 to the pound sterling in June, 1945, and 7,615 by August It seemed incredible that a dollar that had been fixed in 1935 at 1s 2d should have fallen to ten a penny and still exist The answer is that, with a managed currency, a country can do whatever it will internally It's foreign relations that are difficult For the essentials of food, clothing and housing, China has had to support herself, and was quite capable of doing so Variations of prices and exchange make no difference to the farmer, who most of the year in China makes very little use of money As to the shop-keeper—China, like Britain, has been erroneously called a

"nation of shopkeepers"—he's keen enough to see that various exchanges do his trade no harm. One could imagine what a merry time bankers small and great and all concerned with them were having in these troubled financial waters. Only salaried people in Church and State, including foreign missionaries, fell into direst need. Many others did pretty well for themselves in an intriguing situation. The speculators were by no means all of them Chinese, I regret to say. Remember that, you foreign critics. Unreal finance leads to corruption and loss of a true sense of values to all who handle it. One effect of the 1925 Revolution had been to overcome graft, to give officials adequate salaries, and demand honesty in administration. To those who'd spent their lives in China, this had been a welcome and almost unbelievable change from the mediævalism to which they'd been accustomed all their previous lives there.

Under these frantic exchange vagaries, even high-minded foreigners were in danger of losing their sense of proportion. They too were living in an unreal world. There's no question in my mind that in the years that followed Pearl Harbour this state of things had worked sore havoc on the baser sort of Chinese, and not on them alone. Such men were to be found in every walk of life, and graft became rampant once again.

My journey had been taken at a time when dollars had been cheap to British travellers, but were not greatly depreciated in China itself. The journey had consequently proved to be unbelievably cheap. The situation deteriorated rapidly when all the doors to the outside world were closed and imports and exports, to all intents and purposes, ceased.

The other dark cloud was political. It was common knowledge when I was there that the Generalissimo and the Government were apprehensive of their Communist comrades in the north-west. Neither Chinese nor foreigners were encouraged to journey to or move in that direction. There was, however, in 1940 no open clash, and Chiang Kai-shek's position in the land was quite unchallenged. Schoolboys sprang to their feet at the sound of his name. The Japanese, surely the best judges of their enemies, chased him everywhere with their bombs. Between 1940 and 1944 the cleavage widened. Liberal, as well as Communist, ideas gathered strength. With the passage of time, the setting up of the Constitution was more and more delayed. Yet who was really to be blamed for that? China's at least as good a talking-shop as

Britain, and human nature is human nature East and West So there were grumblings in abundance In the spring of 1944, American journalists, wisely or unwisely, began to take a hand, and China was subjected to an attack in the foreign Press that was quite unusual between allies Then, for reasons that only those intimately concerned may know, Chiang Kai-shek demanded and President Roosevelt conceded, the recall of General Joseph Stillwell Finally, in the autumn, the Japanese advanced and captured the American airfields in central China

Missionaries by scores and hundreds were ordered out of China by their ambassadors and consuls, and it looked as though the final crash had come "A house divided against itself cannot stand" Before the war had begun in 1937, Chiang had won control of all China except the north-west, and it was during his personal visit there in 1936 that he was captured by rebellious troops, who were within sight of contriving his death At that time it was generally believed that it was Communist leaders who had insisted on his release Whatever be the issue of the left wing activities in all countries, East and West, arising from and hastened by the war, in China from 1940-5 there was a darkening situation It may turn out to have been the darkness before the dawn Most sincere attempts at reconciliation are being made

The names of Edgar Snow, Stuart Gelder, Gunther Stein and Michael Lindsay make a formidable list of protagonists for the Yenan régime These sincere and earnest men know the great Communist leaders intimately In their pages, Chou En-Lai, Mao Tse-Tung, Chu Teh, Ho Lung, and Peng Teh-Huai are vividly and sympathetically portrayed The "new democracy" of which they write is a most attractive picture If, as they say, the Communists are no longer executing and expelling landlords, if there is now complete religious freedom, if already the entire populace has its true and free share in the government, then the changes that seemed to come in 1937 may be abiding My friend the late Bishop Roots of Hankow in 1938 invited one of these great Communist leaders to his table in Hankow The guest came in, but before he was willing to take his seat said to the good Bishop, "I want you to realise who I am I wrecked your church at X, and killed your clergyman at Y" "*Chi wang puh chu*," was the reply—"Let bygones be bygones" That's old history we're all friends now

With memories of the tension and the "terror" in Hankow of 1927, with memories of captured missionaries held to ransom, slain preachers, wrecked churches and hospitals, and captive workers of the tragic years of the Revolution, there are a great many things, perhaps, on both sides to be forgiven and forgotten in 1946.

American intervention has come, and all lovers of China hope that there may be permanent reconciliation and unity. It will have to go very deep. For whatever achievements the Yenan administration has to its credit, the fact remains that you can hardly have two governments in one country. The Southern States may have been, as they actually were, to many British people more attractive than the Northern States. Yet history approves the judgment of Abraham Lincoln that it was intolerable that the Southern States should have the right to secede. He would not have two Americas. That's been the real point of issue in the Nationalist-Communist conflict in China. There can be one and only one government for China. God grant that it may come through sincere and loyal reconciliation. The open breach after VJ Day, however inevitable, was a terrible disappointment to those who had the welfare of China at heart. For the third time there appears to be agreement between Chiang Kia-shek and his opponents one-party government, it is stated, is at last to end. A constituent assembly of more than 2,000 people is to be gathered to devise the new form of government.

More than forms of government will be needed. There will have to be big-heartedness on many sides. In China the incredible has so often happened and the people so desire peace and order that unification may come again. May peace indeed continue, and China grow into the new nation of which the Revolution has long dreamed.

We don't forget that there has been plenty of unexpected and unwanted strife in other parts of the world besides China since the Great War was ended. It takes a long time for a typhoon to blow itself out and calm sunshine come again.

On my long journey I'd seen for myself again and again the stalwart, well-equipped enemy soldiers. Truly the Japanese were the Germans of the East. For thousands of miles the Chinese defence lines stood and somehow held and continued to hold right to the end. There was no English Channel to ward off the foe.

China was invaded, had partly succumbed, had her traitors and puppets and appeasers, as well as her political differences Yet her resistance went on, however dark the skies After December, 1941, there was little spectacular in that resistance, little first-line news Yet large and well-equipped forces of the Japanese Army, Navy and Air Force were held pinned down in China, whose release would have had vital consequences on the other battle fronts No one, till peace was declared, knew how great the invasion forces had actually been

When bombs and shells fell on Britain, they were falling on China too All the time her casualty lists mounted Her war began two years before ours and still continued for a while when Africa and Europe were at peace The Battle of China was not short and sharp, as the Battle of Britain had been, but, in the final count, the world will recognise that the Battle of China, through those long eight years, was as essential as the Battle of Britain to the ultimate victory of the allies You've only to picture what her submission would have meant of calamity to all the world Happily for us, China had her Chiang Kai-shek, the centre and inspirer of resistance, as we our great Churchill here When I was on that journey, China was disappointed and depressed, war-torn and war-worn We don't forget that in our hour of need some of China's forces helped in the fighting and then in the liberation of Burma She in her turn had some armament from America and the Allies China is far away and in spite of all her share in the common struggle and true place in the great alliance of peace, is too easily underrated

The tide began to turn in China with the defeat of Germany, and the end has meant her liberation once again

My mission and commission had been to visit the Churches In the great trek westwards of the refugees, whose numbers have almost certainly been exaggerated, a new realisation came, both to the evacuees and reception areas, of the extent and oneness of the Christian brotherhood The Chinese for the most part are going and will go back home As soon as the tide of victory began to turn, many were most urgent to start back This, as I travelled about, I'd been assured would happen Only a Japanese victory would have kept them in exile for a time When these Christians and their fellows return, they go back with their minds enlarged, as they've enlarged their brethren's minds The Church they've seen, though small, is everywhere The history of

the Church in China dates back to A.D. 635, but never has it been universal as it is to-day. I found the Church, too, a recognised and helpful element in Chinese society. The internment of her missionaries only put the seal upon fellowship in service and in sacrifice that the National Government had gladly recognised.

The National Health Service of China counts on the place that Christian hospitals are to hold in the health organisation of China which her schools and colleges have held since the Revolution in China's educational system. No longer does the Church live apart: she's an integral part of China's life. Her missionaries are sought, not to dominate, but to share as friends and comrades in the Church of China herself.

China has come through, as that American friend of hers in his college in Peiping knew she would and must: but we can't leave things there. China's very proud. She's China the unconquered, if not the unconquerable. She isn't to be patronised either in her Church or as a State. You can find in China plenty of things to criticise and reform: but surely that is China's business rather than ours, her guests and friends.

You can find to-day in China the highest intellectual gifts as you always could, and great and outstanding characters. There is mediævalism; there is poverty; there is backwardness, there is sin—all of which are more apparent to an outsider than often to those whose life has been lived amidst it all.

It's only a little time ago that a Chinese lady in England told me to my surprise that she was more appalled by London's slum-dom than China's poverty. That's what she said and that's what she meant, however unbelievable it may be to you. We're so sure of our superiority: and so are they of theirs.

In all this whirl of things in all my memories of my journey, the prevailing and underlying memory is one of friendliness—the sheer friendliness and homeliness of the Chinese to those who come to them with friendly hearts and kindly hands. If I've anything to say, except of the good hand of my God upon me for good, it's to bear my witness to the need of utter friendliness between China and Britain. British friendliness—that and nothing else. We're all apt to consider what advantage this or any other thing will be to us. Can't we just be friends for the sake of being friends? The Chinese and the British are very much alike in tradition and in temperament. We were made and meant for friendship. Of that

I'm sure So would you be, had you lived and journeyed among them

As we set out along this path, not only with China, but with America, Russia and the other nations too, we shall not miss our providential way It's a new road for all the nations Is not the Star of Bethlehem still the wise men's guide?

## NOTES ON APPENDICES AND INDEX

- 1 The places visited on the journey are too numerous to include in an index. Their positions, to those interested, are sufficiently indicated in Appendix A.
- 2 To certain places, people and affairs reference is so continuous as to cease to be significant on any particular page. America (American), Britain (British), China (Chinese), Japan (Japanese), together with the Church, the missionaries and the war, are therefore listed in the Index with the word *passim* only.
- 3 All Burmese and Chinese words and expressions are excluded from the Index, but will be found in Appendix B.
4. The names of books to which reference is made in the text are given in the Index in italics.

## APPENDIX A

### THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE CHAPTERS

#### BOOK I TALE OF A TRAVELLER

#### BOOK II THROUGH THE SKIES TO CHINA

- 1 France—Italy—Greece
- 2 Crete—Alexandria—Galilee—Hammadiyeh—Basra—Karachi
- 3 India
- 4 Rangoon—Irrawaddy—Mandalay
- 5 Mandalay—Rangoon—Bangkok—Hanoi

#### BOOK III BY CHINA'S ROADS AND RIVERS

- 1 Hanoi—Kunming—Burma Road—Hsichow
- 2 Hsichow—Ts'uhsiung—Kunming
- 3 Kunming—Hsuenwei—Weining
- 4 Weining—Chaotung
- 5 Stone Gateway of the Tribes
- 6 Over the mountains to Kunming
- 7 Kunming—Kueiyang—Hunan
- 8 Huanghsien—Yuanling
- 9 Yuanling (City of Refuge)—Shaoyang
- 10 Hengyang—Lenhsui'an—Lingling
- 11 On to Ch'angsha
- 12 Ch'angsha diary—Journey to Kukong
- 13 Kukong—Hohuen—Waichow—Tamsui—Kowloon
- 14 Hong Kong—Canton—Fatshan and Hong Kong again
- 15 To Shanghai and the North
- 16 Tientsin—Peiping
- 17 Tsinan—Wuting—Suchow—Pukou
- 18 Nanking—Shanghai—Ningpo
- 19 By Japanese transport to Hankow
- 20 Shanghai—Wenchow—Hong Kong

## BOOK IV THE JOURNEY HOME BY BURMA

- 1 Hong Kong—Udorn—Bangkok—Rangoon
2. Rangoon—Chauk—Yenangyaung—Mandalay
- 3 Monywa—Kalewa—Tahan—and the Chindwin
- 4 Mandalay—Kyaukse—Kalaw—Lonpo—Rangoon.
- 5 Asia—Africa—Europe—Blighty.

## BOOK V CHINA IN THE FOLLOWING YEARS

## APPENDIX B

### GLOSSARY OF BURMESE AND CHINESE WORDS AND PHRASES

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